

By the morning of January 26, the main forces of the Zikeyevo-Zhizdrinsky group of Germans reached the front of Barankovo (2 km northwest of Khludnev), Khludnev, Bryn, Vertnoe, where they fought a stubborn battle against our troops. In the following days, the Germans advanced further and in some areas came

close to Sukhinichi. As a result of a fierce struggle, the enemy managed to withdraw parts of the Sukhinich-garrison from the encirclement.[130] At the end of January, the fascist German troops were again thrown back in a southwestern direction. Stubborn battles with varying success for both sides unfolded in February 1942.

The 16th Army of General Rokossovsky took an active part in these battles, the command of which arrived from the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction. By

24 hours on January 27, the command of the 16th Army received the troops of the 10th Army in the zone: on the right Shlipovo (15 km northwest of Sukhinichi), Ivano-Sergeevsk station, Kocheva station; on the left - Belev (claim.), Ktsyn (30 km southeast of Zikeevo), Bryansk. Since January 28, the 16th Army has been advancing in a southwestern direction, fighting against parts of the enemy's Zikeyevo-Zhizdra grouping. The 10th Army continued combat operations in the Kirov direction.

During the period from January 20 to January 30, the 61st Army concentrated its efforts against the Bolkhov grouping of the enemy. The most active struggle took place on the right flank. The 83rd and 91st cavalry divisions, united in a group, advanced in a southerly direction, reaching the Uzkoye region by January 30th. At this time, the 350th Rifle Division, overcoming the stubborn resistance of the enemy, approached Vasilyevsky. The 387th Rifle Division on the morning of January 30 started a fierce battle for Vyazovaya, Mal. Black. The 346th Rifle Division stepped up its activities after January 20 and fought for Seredichi and Sigolaevo on the night of January 30. The Germans offered stubborn resistance. The 342nd Rifle Division by the end of the day 30 and on the morning of January 31 was engaged in a firefight at the same line. The 356th Rifle Division, after trying to advance on Khmelevaya, defended itself in its positions.

Operational-tactical conclusions on military operations of armies left wing in January 1942

The armies of the left wing of the Western Front, despite the difficult conditions of the offensive, coped with the task, intercepting the Vyazma-Bryansk railway by January 10, and by the end of January 1942, they reached the Warsaw highway.

Separately for the armies, the following should be noted. The rate of advance of **the 49th Army** in January, averaging a little more than 2 km per day (in total, about 50 km was covered from January 9 to 31), is not indicative in this case, since during the offensive it was necessary to overcome two fortified defensive positions of the enemy : Kondrovo line, Linen Factory and Aidarovo, Kostino, Ostrozhnoye, Bogdanovo, Potapovo lines.

The disadvantages in overcoming these fortified lines include the persistent practice of frontal attacks on enemy strongholds and centers of resistance, which led to unnecessary losses in manpower and time.

It is instructive to organize a maneuver to capture the line Kondrovo, Linen Plant in the last period of the struggle for it: a strike by the 5th Guards Rifle Division around Kondrovo from the north, as well as a throw of the 173rd and 238th rifle divisions around the Linen Plant from the south east during the restraining actions of the 133rd Infantry Division from the

front. Just as in previous operations, the issue of interaction with neighboring armies again acquired great importance. The front command paid serious attention to this, aiming the 43rd, 49th and 50th armies in converging directions to defeat the enemy's Medyn-Kondrovo Yukhnov grouping. By turning the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps towards Mosalsk, followed by an attack in a northwestern direction towards Vyazma, the corps was able to interact operationally with the 50th Army. In the offensive **of the 50th Army**, the

regrouping of its divisions from the right to the left flank deserves great attention. During the fighting, it turned out that the enemy in the Yukhnov area put up more resistance than expected. An attempt by the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to capture Yukhnov on the move was unsuccessful; the corps, having suffered heavy losses, was forced to stop and go on the defensive. This forced the front command to look for solutions to the problem elsewhere. Corps was

transferred to the Mosalsk area, after mastering which he had to act in a north-western direction to strike at Vyazma.

The favorable outcome of the battles on the front of the 49th Army to capture the Kondrovo line, the Linen Factory made it possible to transfer the center of gravity of the efforts of the 50th Army to its left flank. As a result, the combat operations of this army took on the character of an offensive with a regrouping

of forces towards the flank. The tank formations that were available in the armies, due to their small number (for example, in the 112th Panzer Division by January 7 there was one T-34 tank and five T-26 tanks) could not play a big role. Therefore, they were subordinated to rifle divisions for joint operations. In some cases, tank formations had to act as rifle units. A similar phenomenon, as we have seen, was with the enemy. This use of tanks was no doubt to some extent due to winter conditions. As in previous operations, the greatest pace of the offensive again fell

to the lot of the **10th Army**. During the 10 days of the offensive before the 330th Infantry Division reached Kirov, the army traveled over 90 km, which averaged about 9-10 km per day. The high pace of the offensive in winter conditions, with insufficiently clear work of the rear, affected the condition of the army troops. In addition, the need to perform tasks in different directions forced the army command to scatter their divisions over a wide front stretching up to 150 km. Therefore, it is no coincidence that when the left flank of the army came under pressure from the fresh forces of the enemy, its divisions were forced to retreat with fighting, thus giving the Germans the opportunity to release the Sukhinich garrison. Command and control of troops is a very difficult task in conditions when the army

commander has many formations under his command (for example, in the 10th army there were 8 rifle divisions), moreover, scattered over a wide front and in constant motion. Despite the measures taken to organize communications and establish the service of communications officers, the army headquarters in a number of cases experienced difficulties, being at a distance of 50 km or more from some of its formations. Based on this, the Military Council of the 10th Army asked the front command to organize corps formations,

to make it easier for the army commander to control subordinate troops. It would be expedient under such conditions to create temporary operational formations (similar to the organization of a mobile group in the 50th Army during the Kaluga operation).

Chapter Nine

Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation

The operational significance of

Medyn Medyn is a small town in the Smolensk region. During the retreat of the Germans after their defeat near Moscow, he acquired a major operational significance. Medyn turned out to be a barrier, which, according to the German command, was supposed to cover the withdrawal of the Nazi troops in a westerly direction. Medyn covered Myatlevo, through which two streams of enemy cargo and people could simultaneously pass: one from Kaluga to Vyazma - by rail, the other - from Maloyaroslavets to Yukhnov - along the Warsaw highway. The German command attached great importance to the retention of Medyn, so the approaches to it were heavily fortified.

The nature of the enemy defenses in the Medyn area A well-equipped highway

leads from Maloyaroslavets to Medyn. In their measures for the defense of Medyn, the Germans provided for the thorough destruction of this highway; all the bridges were blown up or mined, the gorges were filled up; a large number of barriers were erected on parallel tracks.

In large settlements located to the east of Medyn, the Germans built many bunkers, turning these points into strongholds for the fight against our troops. On the way from Maloyaroslavets

to Medyn there are large forests. In winter conditions, they are hardly passable; besides, the Germans filled up, braided with wire and mined the passages in these forests.

As a result of all this, the German command found Medyn to be difficult to access for the Red Army units. It believed that in its rear it was possible to carry out free maneuvering of troops.

The plans of the command of the Western Front to capture Medyn

The command of the Western Front was well aware of the role of Medyn as an obstacle to the complete defeat of those enemy groups that, after the defeat at Kaluga and Maloyaroslavets, went west. Having mastered Medyn, it was possible in Myatlevo to stand in the way of two streams of enemy forces; in connection with the successful actions of the armies of the left wing of the Western Front - the 49th, 50th and 1st Guards Cavalry Corps - this could lead to the encirclement of the enemy in the area of Medyn, Myatlevo, Yukhnov. Therefore, after the capture of Maloyaroslavets by

the troops of the 43rd army, they were aimed at capturing Medyn. In the directive of the front commander dated

January 9, 1942 No. 269 of the 43rd Army (together with the 49th and 50th armies), the task was set: **"To surround *and defeat the enemy's Kondrovo-Yukhnovo-Medyn grouping and develop a strike in a northwestern direction* ".**

Separately, the commander of the 43rd Army was instructed: no later than January 11, defeat the enemy in the Myatlevo, Voronka area and, having completed the destruction of the enemy's Kondrovskaya grouping together with the 49th Army, advance in the general direction of Ugryumovo station, bypassing Gzhatsk from the west.

According to this instruction, the command of the 43rd Army issued the following order (No. 030 / op dated January 9):

"1. The enemy, defeated in the Maloyaroslavets area, is trying to linger on the approaches to Medyn in order to ensure the evacuation of their rear and supplies.

2. On the right, the left-flank units of 33 A went to the front Quay Sloboda, Peremeshaevo, Semichevo, Fedorino, Dyldino; on the left, the right-flank units of 49 A are fighting at the line of Motyakino, Berezovka, Detchino.

3. 43 A, developing the offensive and bypassing individual pockets of resistance, by the end of 10.1.42, captures the Medyn region and by the end of 11.1 captures Myatlevo.

In the subsequent order No. 48 / op dated January 13, 1942, the 43rd Army was tasked with reaching the Ugryumovo station area by the end of January 15. The

tasks assigned to the divisions emphasized the requirement not to carry out frontal attacks on fortified settlements, but to take

their circumvention and coverage; in those cases when it was impossible to bypass such points, it was proposed to burn them, smoking out the Germans in the field, in the cold.

Combat balance of forces and means. The depth of the

operation The following troops participated in the operation of the 43rd Army to capture Medyn: the 5th Airborne Corps, the 53rd Rifle Division, the 17th Division with the 26th Tank Brigade, the 415th Rifle Division and the 194th Rifle Division division with the 18th tank brigade. Quantitatively, given previous losses, this is

amounted to approximately 15,000 active rifles,[131] 400 machine guns, about 100 mortars, 50 guns and up to 40 tanks. On 1 km of the front, with an average width of 25 km, there were 600 rifles, 16 machine guns, 4 mortars, 2 guns and about 2 tanks. Thus, the forces for the offensive operation and the breakthrough of

the enemy's fortified zone were very small. However, the enemy (parts of the 20th Army Corps and the Chevalery group, made up of the remnants of the 29th Motorized and 10th Panzer Divisions, covering the withdrawal of the 20th Army Corps) was largely demoralized. He retreated, clinging to populated strongholds. The Germans tried to gain time by holding rearguard battles, save their rear during the evacuation and withdraw troops. Under such conditions, the decisiveness of our troops, with a huge rise in their morale and a desire to finish off the enemy at all costs, played an exceptionally important role. More could be achieved by bold, skillful action than by mere numerical superiority. It was not possible

to create an accurate idea of the number of enemy troops, but one can think that his forces, which opposed the 43rd Army, at that time did not exceed the forces of our army.

The operation was built to a depth of approximately 60 km with the task of overcoming it within six days. The pace of the operation in the conditions of a winter offensive, without roads and in the presence of a large number of obstacles and mined areas, was planned to be high. On the night of January 10 and in the afternoon of January 10, the weather was not conducive to hostilities - there was low cloud cover, snowfall and a blizzard; visibility is 100–150 m, temperature is 6–9° below zero.

The attack on Medyn

Fulfilling the order of the commander, the troops of the 43rd Army on January 10 began their offensive. The starting point for them was the front line - the Luzha River, in the area of Troitskoye, Panovo, Ilyinskoye, Podsosino, Inyakhino, Yakushevo. The 5th airborne corps with a combined rifle regiment of the army occupied the area of Voskresenki, Kolodezi, Ivanovskaya. The army troops, pursuing the enemy, reached the indicated front

line by January 9th. At the time when the 43rd Army was embarking on its task, the neighbor on the right, the 33rd Army, was fighting in the Vereya area. Its divisions were aimed in a northwesterly direction, resulting in a gap between the armies that was dangerous for the front; the enemy could find him and counterattack both armies on their flanks. This gap was ordered to be filled by the 43rd Army. At that moment, when the army's efforts were directed towards capturing Medyn, the commander of the 43rd Army was forced to withdraw one division (the left-flank 194th) from the operational formation of his army and quickly transfer it to the Aleksandrovka, Kolodezi, Sorochino area. From here, she was supposed to go to the Shan plant and begin military operations to defeat small enemy groups on the Shan River. Such actions of the division provided the right flank of the 43rd and the left 33rd armies. While

the 194th Rifle Division made its castling from the left flank to the right and stood between the 33rd and 43rd armies, all formations of the 43rd army moved forward and reached the front on January 10: the 5th airborne corps with a consolidated regiment - Kochubeevka, Varvarovka, the 53rd rifle division - Sinyavino, the 17th rifle division with the 26th tank brigade - Sokolniki and the 415th rifle division - Stanki. The offensive developed systematically, despite the stubborn resistance of the enemy. The Germans held on especially stubbornly to Mansurovo, Glukhovo,

Sinyavino, Sokolniki and Stanki, where they had reliable strongholds. Despite this, the Germans were driven out of some points by our troops as early as January 10th. On January 12, the army formations moved forward again. The 5th Airborne Corps on that day approached from the northwest to

Medyn and started a fight on its outskirts. At 12 o'clock on the same day, he occupied Yeleshnya 2nd. The consolidated regiment of the army, in order to prevent accidents in relation to the right flank of the army, was advanced to Isakovo. The 17th Rifle Division captured Aduv and by 12 o'clock began a battle on the eastern outskirts of Medyn. The remaining divisions advanced in their directions to the west.

On January 13, the coverage of Medyn continued, and the advance detachment of the 5th airborne corps that day intercepted the highway to Myatlevo, 2 km southwest of Medyn. The German garrison of Medyn was surrounded.

Seeing the hopelessness of resistance, on the night of January 14, the enemy threw materiel into Medyn and in small groups withdrew his forces from the city in the direction of Myatlevo. Some of these groups, having stumbled upon the forward detachment of the airborne corps, were exterminated, others managed to break through to

Myatlev. By morning the city was in our hands. During the occupation of Medyn, the following trophies were taken: 23 guns, 6 tanks, 666 trucks and 15 cars, 42 machine guns, 14 machine guns, 40,000 rounds of ammunition, more than 3,000 shells and many other military equipment. More than 2,000 Germans were killed in the battles for Medyn.

The attack on Myatlevo In

the operation carried out by the 43rd Army, Medyn was only the first stage. This operation pursued the goal of capturing Myatlev in order to eventually, in cooperation with the 49th, 50th armies and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, encircle and destroy the Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping.

The commander of the Western Front, in a telegram dated January 14, No. K-43, indicated to the commander of the 43rd Army (among other army commanders) that the Kondrovo-Yukhnov enemy grouping was striving to retain the Warsaw highway and cover the directions to Gzhatsk, Vyazma and Roslavl.

“The immediate task of the armies of the left wing is to complete the defeat of the enemy’s Kondrovo-Yukhnov grouping and, subsequently, by attacking Vyazma, encircle and capture the Mozhaisk-Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping of the enemy, in cooperation with the armies of the Kalinin Front and the armies of the center of the Western

To this end, the commander of the 43rd Army was asked to capture Myatlev no later than January 16 and further develop the strike in the direction of Yukhnov, Vyazma. The more successfully the army completes the task of occupying Myatlev, the stronger will be the pressure on the flank and rear of the enemy grouping that opposed the 49th, 50th armies and the 1st guards cavalry corps in the Warsaw highway area at that time. The success of the left wing of the Western Front, which carried out the extremely important task of enveloping the Mozhaish-Gzhatsko-Vyazma enemy grouping from the south and southeast, depended on the successful actions of the 43rd

Army. The 49th Army at that time was advancing on Kondrovo; The 50th fought protracted battles on the outskirts of Yukhnov, and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps went to Varshavskoye Highway north of Mosalsk.

Fulfilling the order of the front commander, the commander of the 43rd Army, by order No. 50 / op dated January 15, set the following task for the army troops:

“In order to defeat the enemy’s Yukhnov grouping, 43 A during 16.1 bypasses the enemy’s main nodes of resistance on the Medyn, Yukhnov highway and, by attacking from the flanks, assists units of the 49th and 50th armies in destroying the enemy’s Yukhnov

For these purposes, the main efforts of the army had to be directed to its right flank - to cut off the connection of the enemy's Kondrovo-Yukhnov grouping with those German forces that at that time were in the Vyazma region. The 194th

Rifle Division, which had reached the area of the Shansky Plant and cleared it of the Nazis who had settled there, was given the task of advancing in a southwestern direction, towards Yukhnov, with the aim of covering the actions of the army group that was advancing on Myatlevo with its maneuver. The consolidated regiment of the army, which occupied the Isakov area, received the task of capturing the Koshnyaki station and interrupting the communication of the Germans along the Myatlevo-Vyazma railway. The airborne detachment of Major Starchak, thrown into the Myatlevo area on January 3, 1942, interrupted the movement of the railway at that time in the Myatlevo-Kondrovo section.

Communication by railway Vyazma-Bryansk and the Vyazma-Yukhnov highway with s

the same success was violated by a detachment of the 250th airborne regiment, thrown into the Znamenka area by the beginning of the struggle for Myatlevo.

Use of Airborne Detachments During the

Moscow operation, airborne detachments operated in harsh winter conditions, which greatly increases the interest in their combat work. The landing force under the command of Major Starchak,

consisting of 416 people[132], was thrown into the Bol region. Fatyanovo, 4 km northeast of Myatlev and 2 km from the Medyn-Myatlevo highway. The choice of such a landing point was very bold. The landing took place at night. On the way, on the front line, he was

subjected to heavy fire from enemy anti-aircraft weapons; the planes were forced to disperse, and some of them lost their bearings. Therefore, the landing in the agreed place took place from 21:00 on January 3 to 2:00 on January 4, while the losses in the personnel of the landing reached 15 %.[133]

After gathering, the detachment proceeded to clear the occupied territory from the enemy. 12 German bunkers turned out to be in the area of the drop, with which they had to wage a hard fight for several days. Blocking individual bunkers and suppressing their fire, the paratroopers gradually squeezed the ring around the bunker and then destroyed them. The bunker garrisons were completely exterminated. At this time, another

part of the paratroopers was busy destroying the railway track and destroying enemy cargo and the people guarding them. On January 5, the landing detachment went to the Kostino platform and blew up the bridge located near it. On January 8, he occupied the Myatlevo station and burned two railway echelons on it - the first of them had 28 tanks.

From January 8 to 19, the enemy bunkers were destroyed in the Myatlev area and the occupied territory was cleared of Nazi troops. The detachment attacked the German convoy, which they discovered in the forest west of Dorokhi, while 119 carts with military equipment were captured, later transferred to the 49th Army. From the first day of the landing, regular air contact was maintained with him. At 3 o'clock on January 4,

two TB-3 aircraft, with which the landing force established contact with the help of two red

rockets. On January 5, two MiG planes passed over the paratroopers' descent site on a strafing flight, to which the landing party also let them know about their presence in the area. On the same day at 13 o'clock at the airfield Bol. Our U-2 aircraft landed at Fatyanovo from a strafing flight. Seeing the paratroopers and mistaking them in appearance for the Germans, the pilot, without turning off the engine, got up and flew back.

The landing detachment was given to know that the 34th separate rifle brigade was heading to the area of its location. The paratroopers went to meet her and in the Nikolskoye area on January 30 joined the brigade. By this time, there were 87 people in the airborne detachment; the rest died in heavy seventeen-day battles with the enemy. The task assigned to the detachment was completed. For some time

he disrupted the traffic on the Kondrovo-Myatlevo railway, destroyed a number of enemy bunkers, blew up two echelons with military equipment important for the enemy, and disorganized the work of the nearest German rear. All this allowed our troops to move forward faster and easier to beat the opposing ones.

German units.

However, the performance of such work was accompanied by heavy casualties, which must be attributed to the insufficiently well-organized sending of the landing force:

- 1) preliminary thorough reconnaissance was not carried out terrain and enemy;
- 2) the replenishment of the landing group was not established;
- 3) the detachment was thrown out prematurely, resulting in more crescent led exceptionally heavy fighting in the environment.

Thus, the successful completion of the task was due to the selfless struggle of the paratroopers.

The combat work of the airborne detachment of the 250th airborne regiment began later. The purpose of this operation was to facilitate the successful offensive of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, to ensure the advance of the 33rd Army in

western direction and to assist our troops in the encirclement and destruction of the Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping.

The landing was planned 40 km southeast of Vyazma, in the area of Znamenka, Zhelanye, Luga. At the time of the landing, the distance of this area from the front of our troops reached 35–40 km. The rugged terrain made it possible to carry out a landing operation covertly. The landing area is

intercepted by the Vyazma-Yukhnov highway, along which the Yukhnov grouping of the enemy was fed. The Lugi-Temkino road passes through this area, and the Vyazma-Bryansk railway is located near it. All these paths could be intercepted by landing.

According to our reconnaissance, there were no large enemy forces in the landing area. As a result of the subsequent hostilities, the presence of the following German units was established there: in Znamenka - the headquarters of the division, the convoy and rear units, 200-300 infantry and about 100 horsemen; at the Godunovka junction - an ammunition depot and security guards near an infantry company; at the Debryansky junction - to the infantry battalion; at the Ugra station - the same; in Wielkopolska - two infantry platoons; in Ivantsovo - convoy; in Podsosonki - the headquarters of the formation (presumably the corps); in the points of Klimov Zavod, Sidorovskoye, Sinyukova, Gubino - infantry in the amount of 300-500 people each.

To participate in the landing operation, the following were involved: the 250th airborne regiment, the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 201st airborne brigade.

The formation and training of the airborne detachment was carried out by the Air Force Directorate of the Western Front at the Vnukovo airfield. The paratroopers were divided into two battalions: the first - under the command of Captain Surzhik and the second - under the command of Captain Kalashnikov. Preparations for the operation were completed by 17

January. For the transportation of the landing force, a special-purpose flight unit of the civil air fleet was used, which had 21 PS-84 ("Douglas") aircraft and was concentrated at the Vnukovo airfield by the time of the flight. For the transportation of 45-mm guns, TB-3 aircraft from the 23rd Aviation Division were allocated.

The flight crew had sufficient practice of night flights and showed excellent training and ability to land on poorly lit terrain with snow cover. The planes were quite adapted for transportation and did not require any additional equipment. In self-defense, they had turret machine guns.

The personnel participating in the operation were divided into two groups - parachute and landing. The composition of the groups was as follows.

Наименование груза	Парашютно-десантная группа	Посадочная группа
Людей	452	1200
Винтовок	263	300
ППШ	142	646
Ручных пулеметов	28	40
Станковых пулеметов	10	28
Минометов	11	—
Противотанковых ружей	6	—
45-мм орудий	—	2

The operation was designed for three stages: **First stage.** The parachute assault force captures and holds the airfield and the area adjacent to it in order to prepare and ensure the reception of the landing assault force. **Second phase. 2**

hours 30 minutes after the landing of the parachute assault on the captured airfield, the launch team lands, which breaks the launch and organizes the reception landing force.

Third stage. 30 minutes after the landing of the launch team, the landing force is received. The troops land in groups of 2-3 aircraft, so as not to create a large crowd of people and vehicles at the airfield.

On January 18, at 03:36, the first batch of airborne troops, consisting of 16 ships, began to take off from the Vnukovo airfield. Until 9 o'clock that day, 452 people were thrown into the area of Znamenka and Zhelanye.

The second batch of 10 ships was sent to the same area on January 19 at 1:20. Due to unfavorable weather, part of the ships returned, one lost orientation; the rest successfully completed their task.

In just two days, the following were delivered: command staff - 55 people, junior command staff - 120 people, enlisted personnel - 467 people. With them transferred: rifles - 256, PPD and PPSH - 325, light machine guns - 33, mortars - 10, anti-tank rifles - 5, revolvers - 78, ammunition - 2 ammunition, radio stations - 7, explosives - 350 kg. From

17:30 to 17:50 on January 18, 4 PS-84 aircraft landed at the site near the southern outskirts of Znamenka with 65 people from the landing team, including 15 people from the launch team. The planes landed in the dark, with a snow cover of 50–60 cm, on a site unfamiliar to the flight crew and separated from the settlement occupied by the enemy, only one and a half to two kilometers. The planes did not have skis, as a result of which one of the four could not take off to fly back, and the next day was burned by the Germans.

Throughout the day on January 19, on the northern outskirts of Plesnev, under the leadership of Captain Surzhik, a landing site was being prepared to receive the landing force. In addition to the landing and launch teams, partisans[134] and the local population in the amount of up to 400 people were involved in this work. January 20 at 9:37 tov. Surzhik reported:

“Landing on wheels is possible; coordinates 38 535; send urgently. Surzhik.

Due to unfavorable meteorological conditions, landing troops landed on the site near Plesnev for three days - January 20, 21 and 22. By this time, enemy aircraft, having discovered the landing area, attacked him. The airfield has undergone

bombardment and machine-gun fire. As a result, the landing had to be carried out at night. In total, 1,643 people were thrown out and landed with the airborne assault, support group and launch team. They delivered: rifles - 564, PPSH - 817, heavy machine guns - 31, light machine guns - 73, anti-tank

rifles - 11, mortars

- 34, 45-mm

guns - 2, radio sets - 12. Of this

number of people and means

due to attacks 3 aircraft were lost

from the air, 27

people were killed

and 9

wounded. The airborne troops after their drop concentrated: the 1st battalion - in the Plesnevo, Zhelanye, Mal. Lokhov; 2nd Battalion - in the Zamoshye area. At 5 p.m. on January 19, a radiogram was received from the headquarters of the Western Front.

“Zhukov ordered: to immediately occupy Bogatyri, Znamenka, Zarechye in order to cut off the escape routes of the Yukhnov enemy grouping. At the same time, move guards to Reutovo, which will prevent the enemy from approaching from the Temkino area.

Carrying out the assigned task, the airborne troops simultaneously ensured the reception of new groups of landing troops; they arrived until 22 January. On January 20, at 16:20, the landing

party received a new radiogram from the front:

“By the morning of January 26, with part of the forces, capture the point in square 7550 (Klyuchi), and strike at the rear of the enemy in the direction of the point in square 8154 (Lyudkovo), assist Belov’s group and enter from in touch with her.”

The commander of the 250th Airborne Regiment misunderstood assigned task. The following clarification was received in response to his request:

“FIRST: do not leave the area 4746 (Znamenka), 5342 (Desire), 5338 (Luga) and at all costs keep the area, occupying

4746 (Znamenka);

SECOND: our units 22.1 go to area 2774 (Temkino), they are tasked with contacting you; THIRD: To assist

Belov with part of the forces, approximately two battalions; FOURTH: by

**all means stop moving
enemy troops along the highway 6588 (Yukhnov), 1526
(Vyazma). Zhukov".**

Having received such an order, the commander of the 250th airborne regiment made a decision: to unite the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 201st airborne brigade under the command of Captain Surzhik and push them to the Klyuchi area with the task of delivering a blow to the enemy from the rear, than contribute to the success of General Belov's group.

Fulfilling the task, Surzhik's detachment reached Petrishchevo on January 22 by 11 o'clock and continued further movement in a southerly direction. On January 28, in the Tynovka area, he joined up with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov and entered his operational subordination.

The 250th Airborne Regiment continued to carry out its task - to hold the Znamenka area in its hands and prevent the enemy from moving along the Yukhnov-Vyazma highway. On January 30, in the Glukhovo area, he entered into contact with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, and on February 4, according to a radiogram from the Air Force Directorate of the Western Front, he became subordinate to the commander of the 239th Rifle Division, which was part of this corps. The functions of the airborne detachment were completed at this point.

The detachment carried out an extremely difficult and responsible combat mission for 12 days and achieved significant results.

At the time of the encirclement of the Kondrovo-Yukhnovo Myatlevskaya group of Germans by our units, the detachment intercepted and heroically held for several days the most important routes along which the enemy could maneuver troops and equipment. It disrupted the work of the rear of the German troops and facilitated the advancement of our cavalry and rifle units in a northwestern direction.

The landing party helped our troops in the implementation of the tasks put forward Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation.

The course of combat operations of

the 43rd Army While the airborne landings successfully carried out their combat operations, the fulfillment of the tasks assigned to the 43rd Army proceeded as follows. Concentrating in the area of the Shan plant, the 194th Rifle Division on January 15 went on the offensive in a southwestern direction. On January 16, having overcome the slight resistance of the enemy, one regiment of this division occupied Iznoski, the other - Bekleshi, the third - Domantsevo. On January 17, crowding out small groups of the enemy, the division approached Izvolsk with one regiment, occupied Tetevo with another, and entered Iznoski with the third. On January 16–19, the offensive of the 194th Infantry Division continued.

On January 19, by 15:00, one regiment captured Pupovka, another blocked Khvoshchi, and the third approached Bol. Semenovskiy. On the way of its movement, the division cleared the area of the enemy, and in order to fend off accidents, it was forced to leave one rifle battalion each in Kuzov and in Izvolsk. She approached Yukhnov with weakened strength.

The consolidated regiment of the 43rd Army, operating to the left of the 194th Infantry Division, broke into the Koshnyaki station on January 13, destroyed the fascist guards of the bridges and the station there, and destroyed the railway track. Five days after that, the regiment heroically repelled enemy attacks from the direction of Myatlevo, who sought to clear the section of the Myatlevo-Vyazma railway occupied by Soviet troops. The forces of the regiment were fading more and more in this unequal struggle, but the 53rd rifle division came to its aid, which, after the occupation of Medyn, was withdrawn to the reserve and, until January 16, was understaffed and replenished with weapons in Medyn.

By January 16, the task assigned to the 43rd Army - to occupy Myatlevo - was not completed. This circumstance made it difficult for the 50th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps to solve problems, and in general delayed the operation to encircle and destroy the Kondrovo-Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping.

Such a delay played into the hands of the enemy, who, taking advantage of the slowness of the actions of our units, could

slip out of the environment. Taking this into account, the chief of staff of the Western Front, General Sokolovsky, by order of January 16, demanded that the commander of the 43rd Army quickly fulfill the task assigned to him.
tasks.

"The front commander ordered to immediately defeat the enemy on the river. Shan, take control of Myatlevo and rapidly develop a blow to Yukhnov. For this purpose, immediately on combat alert, raise 53 rifle divisions and, throwing it around the enemy defending on the river. Shan, capture Myatlevo."

On the same day, January 16, the commander of the 43rd Army received a telegram from the commander of the Western Front, General Zhukov, which stated:

"If you definitely do not follow the order to withdraw the army troops to the designated areas on January 16, 1942, then you will disrupt the operation plan, and you will put 50 A and the Belov group in a difficult situation."

The situation on the Shan River by this time was as follows: the 5th Airborne Corps, stopped on January 15 by enemy fire near Romanov, could not move forward. The 17th Rifle Division with the 26th Tank Brigade fought that day for Reutovo, Kosovo, Mosharovo. The 415th Rifle Division tried unsuccessfully to capture Bogdanova and Ivanishchev. The main backbone of the army was thus stuck in front of the enemy fortifications on the Shan River and was unable to move on. Since three formations of the 43rd Army with their offensive in this sector tied up large enemy forces, the solution to the problem of capturing Myatlev had

to be sought not in a frontal offensive, but bypassing this point from the flank and rear. Based on this, the chief of staff of the front proposed to throw the 53rd rifle division around the enemy defending Myatlevo. By the time they received the order from the chief of staff and the telegram from the front commander, the 53rd division was involved in the battle and participated in the attack on the enemy, who was defending along the Shan River. It took at least a day to withdraw

the division from the battle and organize a march maneuver to Myatlevo. The division was able to break away from the enemy only on January 17; On January 18, she was already on the march, performing

the task assigned to her. Following her, on a different route, five ski battalions were sent.

At the moment when the 53rd Rifle Division was sent around to Myatlev, the position of the combined army regiment at the Koshnyaki station became more difficult. As a result, the division was forced to turn to the Koshnyaki station in order to assist the consolidated regiment and eliminate the possibility of the Germans appearing in their rear during their further movement to Myatlevo. In the area of the Koshnyaki station, stubborn battles began with large enemy forces that had approached here. Apparently, he was looking for a way out of the encirclement outlined for him, and therefore threw his forces in the direction of Myatlevo, Vyazma. The

operational orientation of the headquarters of the Western Front on January 19 stated this:

“Parts 57, 13 and 43 of the enemy’s AK are in the operational environment, which is also recognized by the Germans themselves (radio interception on 19.1.42). The enemy will try to break out of the environment. Our task is to

prevent this.” Under these conditions, the right flank of the army, the density and stability of our troops deployed here, acquired great importance. This density (two rifle divisions and a combined regiment of the army, stretched out on a 40-kilometer front) was not high. In order to prevent the enemy from breaking through from Myatlevo, it was necessary to increase it. For this purpose, it was necessary to withdraw part of the forces from the group of troops that led the frontal attack on Myatlevo.

On January 18, the 5th Airborne Corps was sent towards the right flank. On January 19, in the area of the Koshnyaki station, he joined up with a combined regiment and, together with the 53rd Infantry Division, defeated the enemy forces that were there. After that, the 53rd Rifle Division was sent to the area where the 194th Rifle Division was fighting, and the 5th Airborne Corps and the combined regiment of the army were given the task of defending the Koshnyaki station area in order to prevent the movement of enemy forces in a westerly direction. On January 19, the 5th Airborne

Corps and the combined regiment had to endure a stubborn battle with an enemy group (up to

one and a half infantry regiments), which tried to break through to the west from the area of Trushonka, Krasnaya Polyana, Bulatovo. The enemy grouping was defeated and scattered in

different directions. At this time, another enemy group was trying to break out of the encirclement through Horsetails; small groups of Germans seeped in a westerly direction from Semyonovskoye and Domanovo. On these routes, the 194th and 53rd rifle divisions smashed the Nazis; the latter, as the territory was cleared of the Germans, gradually moved in a southwestern direction, increasing the density of the front, which the 194th rifle division created here, with its own forces.

The enemy's attempts to get out of the encirclement, which appeared along the entire right flank of the 43rd Army, indicated that the Germans did not intend to hold Myatlevo for a long time. Their main efforts now boiled down to getting out as quickly as possible from the encirclement that had become clear to them. Therefore, our troops had to more tightly lock up the enemy forces in the Myatlevsky region and not allow them to leave in a

westerly direction. In view of this, on January 21, the 17th Rifle Division and the 18th Tank Brigade were removed from the Myatlev front and transferred to the right flank of the army. On the front against Myatlevo, only the 415th Rifle Division remained, stretching its forces from Romanovo to Ivanishchevo. In the area of the Koshnyaki station, the 17th Rifle Division and the 18th Tank Brigade withstood a stubborn battle with the enemy's 268th Infantry Division, which by that time had been fully staffed and included SS units.

On January 20, more serious attempts by the enemy began to break the encirclement in the Yukhnov area. On this day, the Nazis launched a large offensive against the 194th Infantry Division in the Pupovka area, while at the same time putting pressure on those units of the 50th Army that at that time were located southwest of Yukhnov. The enemy sought to keep the Warsaw highway in his hands and protect himself from a blow to the flank and rear from the 43rd Army.

Under pressure from superior German forces, the 194th Infantry Division was forced to leave Pupovka and organize defenses at a new line - Priselye, Kunovka. The fighting

that began on the right flank of the army soon turned from Pupovka to Myatlevo. The enemy broke through to the west through Kunovka,

Morozovo, Khvoshchi, Tetevo, Bulatovo and Vorsobino. Fierce battles were going on at all these points, but the superiority of forces on the side of the enemy did not allow our units to bring these battles to a successful end. The Germans broke through our defenses and went west in small units. In the situation that had arisen, it was again necessary to increase pressure on Myatlevo, take possession of it and quickly develop success along the Varshavskoe highway in order to go into the flank and rear of the retreating enemy. The forces of the 43rd Army were not enough for this purpose (in fact, one 415th Rifle Division), and it was impossible to transfer units to this direction from the right flank.

Since the 33rd Army had completed the main task of occupying Vereya, the front command decided to transfer the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division from its composition to the 43rd Army. This was supposed to strengthen the grouping of the 43rd Army near Myatlevo and, as a result of joint actions of the 1st Guards Motorized and 415th Rifle Divisions, lead to the capture of this point. The 415th Rifle Division, advancing methodically,

by January 27 reached the approaches to Myatlevo. In the evening of the same day, the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division arrived at Myatlevo. On the night of January 29, after preliminary preparations, the attack on Myatlevo began.

According to the attack plan, the 415th Rifle Division built its battle formation on the left flank of the operational formation of the group, the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division - on the right and in the center. The 415th Rifle Division was supposed to demonstrate the coverage of Myatlevo from the southeast and bypass it from the south. The 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division, taking advantage of the distraction of the enemy's attention and forces in this direction, was supposed to overturn it with a short blow from the front and break into Myatlevo.

The divisions completed their tasks exactly, and on January 29 at 4 o'clock Myatlevo was in the hands of the Soviet troops. Not stopping at the occupied point and leaving the units of the 415th Rifle Division to clear it of the remnants of the Nazi troops, the 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division developed success along the Warsaw highway, pursuing and crowding out the retreating enemy forces. Near

Funnels, she came across a large group of Germans, who put up strong resistance to her. A fierce battle ensued, merging with

the fighting that was going on at that time on the right flank of the 43rd Army. But these actions, with their results, already go

beyond the framework of the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation, which can be considered completed after the capture of Myatlevo, and constitute the content of a new operation to destroy the enemy in the Yukhnov area.

After the capture of Myatlevo and Kondrovo by our troops, the organization of a barrier from the west by parts of the 43rd Army and the exit of the troops of the 50th Army to Yukhnov, and parts of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of Warsaw to Kondrovo-Yukhnov, the only group of Germans was forced to break out of the encirclement. Its efforts were directed towards the Varshavskoye highway, where a "gate" was to be formed southwest of Yukhnov for the exit of the encircled fascist troops. From the end of January and into February, fierce battles took place in the Yukhnov area, as a result of which enemy

units were badly battered; their remnants escaped from the encirclement and went south-west along the Varshavskoe highway. Approximately half of the German troops died while leaving

environment.

The work of the rear in the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya

operation In the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation carried out by the 43rd Army, the work of the rear of the army is of considerable interest. The operation, as we have seen, was of a peculiar character. Starting as an offensive against a fortified enemy point and a road junction, in its development it developed into complex military operations - a simultaneous attack on this point and the encirclement of the enemy, who was separated from neighboring troops. The encirclement actions of the

43rd Army unfolded on a significant front - up to 50-60 km. Supplying units with everything necessary (ammunition, fuel, food forage, etc.) was a complex and difficult task. It was necessary to use light vehicles, on which in winter conditions it was possible to throw up off-road

cargo. In this regard, the sleigh carts, which followed the troops, rendered a great service. Where it was impossible to pass the usual sledge in a horse-drawn carriage, snowmobiles and skiers were sent. Following the sledges were motorcades, the advancement of which required the clearing and improvement of roads. The command of the 43rd Army paid great attention to the timely completion of this kind of work.

"15. In view of the lack of roads in the army's operational zone, - we read in the order for the army of January 13, 1942 No. 48 / op, - commanders of formations in their demarcation lines should put roads in order at the rate of one per sd. 16. The head of the rear in the army's zone of operations should ensure: a) the relocation of all rear facilities; b) build one army road; c) restore existing bridges and roads."

In another order (No. 50 / op dated January 15, 1942), the army commander demanded that the chief of logistics unload the roads from the convoys accumulated on them. The lightness of these convoys ensured the supply of units; their accumulation on the roads unmasked the work of the troops. During the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation, the question was raised of organizing such a wagon train that could serve units that were separated from other troops, as well as conducting their work in winter conditions and in the forest.

Conclusions 1. In the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation, the plan of the command of the Western Front to encircle and destroy the Kondrovo-Yukhnovo Myatlev grouping of the enemy was not completed.

A large grouping of Germans (parts of three army corps) kept a compact mass, occupying a significant area and preventing further compression or fragmentation into pieces of their battle formation. Great efforts were needed by our troops in order not only to encircle this enemy grouping, but also to break it up into separate parts that would be shot through with real fire. But there was not enough strength for this, as a result of which the struggle took on a protracted character and did not end with the complete destruction of the encircled enemy.

In particular, the 43rd Army was entrusted with the difficult task of restraining the enemy's pressure with limited forces when he tried to leave the encirclement in a westerly direction.

2. In the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation, airborne troops were used in cooperation with ground units. The airborne units greatly facilitated the operations of the ground forces, despite the fact that organizational inconsistencies in the planning of the work of the detachments reduced the results of their combat activities and led to unnecessary losses. The experience of combat operations of airborne assault forces in the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation requires:

a) a well-thought-out plan for landing; b) preliminary thorough reconnaissance of the terrain and the enemy; c) accurate determination of the time and depth of the landing, so that ground units interacting with the landing could quickly approach it and build on the success achieved by the landing; d) good selection of people in the detachments and supplying them with the necessary portable and powerful combat and technical means; Special consideration should be given to the question of feeding the people in the detachments, and in winter conditions, to combat the cold. Combat use of airborne units

V

The operation we examined gave the following results:

a) in two cases, the use of airborne assaults made it difficult for the enemy maneuvering reserves, and at times completely excluded it; b) disrupted the normal operation of the rear of the enemy on those plots; where the airborne troops were dropped; c) the offensive operations of our troops were facilitated; d) the encirclement of the Kondrovo-Yukhnovo-Myatlevskaya enemy groupings; e) assistance was provided to the offensive of the 33rd army in the direction of Vyazma. In general, this gave our troops operating on the left wing of the Western Front a number of operational benefits. 3. From the tactical side, the following should be noted in the actions of our troops in the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation. a) There was an exaggerated idea of the forces and capabilities of the enemy in the operation. With insufficient intelligence, this led to somewhat slow actions to encircle Medyn and develop

strike on Myatlevo - marking time took place, allowing the enemy (as, for example, in Medyn) to withdraw his troops even from surrounded points. b) The desire

of the units to conduct an offensive frontally, in the forehead of the fortified points of the enemy, despite categorical prohibitions. This led to an unnecessary waste of manpower and resources, loss of time, and allowed the enemy to get out of the dangerous situations into which he fell. Example: the battles of units of the 5th Airborne Corps, the 17th and 415th Infantry Divisions on the Shan River, which made it possible for the Nazis to evacuate Myatlevo.

c) The correct alignment of forces and the expedient actions of the 1st Guards Motorized and 415th Rifle Divisions during the occupation of Myatlevo on January 29: the combined actions were structured in such a way that they diverted the attention and forces of the enemy from the direction of the main attack, which was quickly and decisively inflicted by 1- I am a Guards

Motorized Rifle Division. 4. In the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation, attention is drawn to the endurance and courage of our troops, who managed in harsh winter conditions, in deep snow, in a blizzard, to pursue the enemy at night, break his resistance and in an extremely difficult situation

beat and destroy the enemy. 5. Worthy of special attention and study is the work of the rear. In encirclement battles, when units are thrown over long distances off-road, it becomes of serious importance; her experience should be taken into account when organizing similar work in the future.

Chapter Ten

The offensive of the 33rd army to Vyazma with the aim of splitting the enemy front

The situation in the central sector by mid-January 1942

of the year

By mid-January 1942, the situation on the central sector of the Western Front developed as follows: a large enemy stronghold, Dorohovo, was occupied by our troops. The troops of the 5th Army, aimed at Mozhaishk, were on the flank and threatened to reach the rear of the enemy's Vereisk grouping. Mozhaishk and Vereya were on the eve of the fall. The enemy hastily withdrew the rear and troops from here in the direction of Gzhatsk, where he, relying on Vyazma, intended to organize a new center of resistance. On January 13, the combined regiment of the 43rd Army occupied the

Koshnyaki station, destroyed the German guards here and destroyed the Vyazma-Myatlevo railway track. The flow of enemy cargo and people, which had previously moved along this path, now went along the Varshavskoe highway to Yukhnov.

In the plans of the German command, Yukhnov (based at the Zanoznaya station) was to play the same role as a major resistance center, like Gzhatsk. Zanoznaya and Vyazma are connected by a railroad, along which the interaction of two enemy groupings that opposed the central sector of the Western Front took place. The main groupings of German forces in front of the center of the

Western Front in mid-January 1942 were concentrated in the Gzhatsk direction and in the Yukhnov area. There were few German troops in the strip of terrain between the niches, and they only covered the path to Vyazma from the east. At this time, the 50th Army was fighting on the outskirts of Yukhnov, and the 1st Guards

Cavalry Corps was approaching the Warsaw highway north of Mosalsk. Under such conditions, there was no need for an offensive by the 33rd Army (after the occupation

of Vereya) in the direction of Yelnya, Gzhatsk, in the rear of the enemy's Mozhaishk grouping; it was more profitable to use the army for

a deeper blow - to Vyazma, where the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was aiming in its offensive from Mosalsk. The Kalinin Front at that time was developing a successful offensive from the north, reaching the rear of the Gzhatsk-Vyazma group of Germans.

With the occupation of Vyazma, the Gzhatskaya grouping of the enemy was cut off from its base, the interaction of two large enemy groupings based on Vyazma and the Zanoznaya station was disrupted.

Since the Vereya operation of the 33rd Army was coming to an end, the front command had the opportunity to withdraw part of the forces of this army from Vereya in order to throw them on Vyazma. On January 17, 1942, by

telegram No. K-49, the front commander oriented the commander of the 33rd Army, demanding from him

"simultaneously with the liquidation of the enemy in Vereya, from the morning of 19.1, withdraw the main forces of the army to the area of Dubna, Zamytskoye, having a further task, depending on the situation, to attack Vyazma or bypass it from the south."

The front commander ordered the advanced units to reach the Dubna, Zamytskoye area no later than January 19, the main forces - on January 20; ahead of the units to organize the advancement of skiers.

Measures taken by the command of the 33rd Army to organize the offensive

On January 17,

on the day of receiving the directive from the front commander, the commander of the 33rd Army issued the following order (No. 021 of January 17, 1942):

"1. The offensive of the 33rd Army on Yelnya, as belated, was canceled by the front commander. 2. On the

right, the 5th Army captures Mozhaisk. Line with her: to Novo-Nikolskoye - the former, then - the claim. Vaulino, Vyazma.

On the left, the 43rd Army (194th Rifle Division), without encountering much resistance from the enemy, captured the area of Iznoski, Koshnyaki and is

advancing on Yukhnov. 3. A favorable situation was created for the 33rd Army for a quick advance to the Vyazma region, to the rear of the enemy's Vyazma grouping.

Simultaneously with the liquidation of the enemy in Vereya, the main forces of the army, from 17.1.42, forced marches to the Dubna, Zamytskoye region, having a further task, depending on the situation, to strike at Vyazma or bypass it from the southwest.

Advance units in the area of Dubna, Zamytskoe, the army leaves no later than 19.1.42, the main forces 20.1.42.

I order: a) 93rd

Rifle Division, destroying the opposing enemy, immediately begin advancing to the west and by the end of 17.1 reach the area of Lvovo, Zhikharevo, Sverdlovo; by the end of 18.1 go to the area: Mochalniki, Dryablovo, Kuzova; by the end of 19.1 concentrate in the area of Dubna, Prokopovo, Stepanchiki. The offensive

zone: on the right - Novo-Aleksandrovka, Nikitskoye, lawsuit. Okay, lawsuit. Shugailovo, claim. Washcloths, suit. Ostroluchie, lawsuit. Yurovka; on the left - Goltyaev, Nasonovo, lawsuit. Petrovsk, Kositsk, Lutkino, suit. Musino, Lukovo.

b) 338th Rifle Division, destroying the opposing enemy, immediately begin advancing to the west and by the end of 17.1 reach the area of Kremenskoye, Troitskoye, Ragozino; by the end of 18.1 go to the area of Bekleshi, Podzharovka, Fokino; by the end of 19.1 concentrate in the area of Zamytskoye, Korkodinovo, Voskresensk.

The offensive zone: on the right - the left demarcation line of the 93rd rifle division; on the left - Asenievskoe, lawsuit. Medyn, claim.

Kukushkino, Zamytskoye. c) 222nd Rifle Division, destroying the enemy in the Mityaev area and on the northern outskirts of Vereya, immediately begin advancing to the west and reach the Kulakovo, Kurlovo, Efimovo area by the end of 17.1; by the end of 19.1, go to the Masalovka, Mikhalevo, Sorokino area; by the end of 20.1, concentrate in the Semenovskoye, Matrenino area. Kozlakovo.

The boundary line on the left is a lawsuit. Vereya, Arkhangelsk, Maryina, suit. Raevo, Mikhailovo, lawsuit. Motovkino, claim.

Savinki. d) 1 St. honey, in cooperation with the 113th rifle division, after destroying the enemy and capturing the city of Vereya, immediately begin advancing to the west and by the end of 17.1 reach the Fedyushkino, Kurlovo, Kamenka area; by the end of 18.1 go to the area of Nikitskoye, Lvov, Shimnovo; by the end of 19.1, concentrate in the area of Mochalniki, Terekhovo, Esovtsy.

The offensive zone: on the right - the left demarcation line of the 222nd rifle division; on the left - Vereya, Kurnevo, Novo-Aleksandrovka, Valyutino, Skorodinka, suit.

Seeds, suit. Shansky plant, Maryino, suit. Ogarevo, Zamyatino, Bulgakovo.

e) 113th Rifle Division in cooperation with the 1st Guards. honey, having destroyed the enemy and occupied the city of Vereya, immediately begin advancing to the west and by the end of 17.1 reach the Vasilevo, Popovo, Yastrebovo area; by the end of 18.1 go to the area of Kukanovka, Troitskoye, Bryukhovo; by the end of 19.1 go to the area of Shansky plant, Nikulino;

by the end of 20.1 concentrate in the area of Kuznetsovo, Voinovo, Shumovo. The offensive zone: on

the right - the left demarcation line of the 1st Guards. honey, on the left - the right demarcation line 338 sd. f) 110 sd, contributing to the capture of Vereya 113 sd and 1 guards. honey, by the end of 17.1 concentrate in the Vereya area in readiness from the morning of 18.1 to start a march along the route Vereya, Kamenka, Shustikovo, Nikitskoye, Sleptsovo, Masalovka. By the end of 18.1, go to the Kryukovo,

Shustikovo area; by the end of 19.1, go to the area of Peredel, Rakitskoye; by the end of 20.1, concentrate in the area of Masalovka, Mikhalevo, Darino. 4. Take advantage of the absence of significant enemy forces in

5. When organizing a march, division commanders, in addition to sending forward military reconnaissance and guards, must organize reconnaissance of routes by sappers and

chemists. 6. The axis of movement of the army: Borovsk,

Vereya, Shan plant. The 1st Guards Motorized Rifle Division, in the process of organizing a march maneuver, received a change in its movement - it came under the command of the commander of the 43rd Army and was supposed to take part in the Myatlev attack; the rest of the divisions carried out their tasks as they were set in order No. 021 of the commander of the 33rd Army.

The offensive of the 33rd Army

towards Vyazma At the time of receiving the combat order from the commander of the 33rd Army to move part of the divisions to a new concentration area with the aim of attacking Vyazma, the army troops were fighting near Vereya. Therefore, it took some time to separate them from the enemy and organize marching movement in the indicated area. First

On the night of January 19, the 93rd Rifle Division set out. On January 20, after capturing Vereya, the 1st Guards Motorized, 113th and 338th Rifle Divisions marched to the areas of new concentration (the first of them, on the instructions of the front commander, was sent to reinforce the 43rd Army) January 22 33rd I army (except for the 110th Infantry

Division, left in Vereya) was marching to a new area. The enemy impeded the movement of troops and repeatedly bombed our

columns.

The 113th Rifle Division on that day in the area of the Shansky Plant was attacked on the march by a group of enemy machine gunners from Shevnevo, repelled their attack and held the Shansky Plant. Leaving cover here, the division continued its march to the west. On January 23, the 93rd Rifle Division

concentrated in the Iznoski area, from where the 113th Rifle Division began to advance with its advanced units to the Temkin area; The 338th Rifle Division at that time was located in the area of Volkovo, Melentyevo, Volyntsy; the rest of the divisions were on their way to their areas of concentration.

On the night of January 24, the 222nd Rifle Division on the march ran into the enemy, who had fortified himself in the Ponomarikha area. A fight ensued, which took on a protracted character. Later reconnaissance established that, in addition to Ponomarikha, enemy strongholds were also located in the villages of Vozzhikhino, Shevnevo, Mochalniki, Orekhovnya, Khimino, Chelishchevo and Ivanovskoye, i.e., on the path of most divisions moving to the west 33 th army. Therefore, the divisions during their movement were forced to linger in order to eliminate enemy resistance that had arisen in their path.

In addition to the 222nd Rifle Division, on January 23, the 110th Rifle Division, which also received the task of advancing to a new area, was forced to deploy with one regiment and fight in the Vozhikhino area. In these battles

(and they were fought in the following days), the divisions of the 33rd Army usually overturned a few enemy units, but each such battle distracted the troops moving to the west from the goal that was set for them. This resulted in a large stretch.

on the march of the formations of the 33rd Army. For example, on January 26, in their position, we observe the following picture:

- The 222nd Infantry Division fought for Rodionkovo, Esovtsy, Voditskoye. • 110th rifle division

(without one regiment transferred to the 222nd rifle division) fought for Shevnevo, Azarovo, Vodopyanovo.

- The 160th Infantry Division, which became part of the 33rd Army, advanced on Nekrasovo in the morning, from where it was supposed to advance to Iznoski and later take a place on the left flank of the army.

- The 98th Rifle Division in the Ugryumovo junction area approached the Gzhatsk-Yukhnov highway. • The 113th

Rifle Division at 15 o'clock occupied Vyazishche, Lushchino, bypassing the enemy in Ivanovsky.

- The 338th Rifle Division captured Voskresensk and Mamushi at 8 o'clock and, without encountering much resistance from the Germans, continued to advance in the direction of Zamytskoye. The enemy sought to

delay the advance of our troops and, not being able to do this against the divisions of the first echelon, intensified his attacks on the second and third echelons of the army.

On January 26, the commander of the Western Front, by directive No. K-83, **advised** the commander of the 33rd Army that on the morning of that day, the cavalry group of the Kalinin Front, reinforced by motorized infantry, went 12 km west of Vyazma and cut the railway and all the escape routes of the German troops.

The commander of the front demanded from the commander of the 33rd Army: **"to**

go on a forced march on January 28 to the area of Krasny Kholm, Gredyakino, Podrezovo, where to get in touch with the 4th VDK[135] airborne assault and the cavalry of the Kalinin Front."

In the same directive, the commander of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps was required to: having broken through the enemy's front, go to the Semlevo station (west of Vyazma), and the commanders of the 43rd and 50th armies were tasked with speeding up the occupation of Yukhnov, after which, leaving part of the forces for elimination of the defeated enemy, with the main forces to go south-west of Vyazma.

On January 27, a group of divisions - the 113th and 338th - without encountering enemy resistance, captured the areas, respectively

Skotinino and Dorofeevo, Kobelevo. At this time, the 222nd, 110th and 93rd rifle divisions fought and were attacked by the enemy from the air in the former areas - Dubna, Trosna, Mochalniki. On this day, as on the following days, the weather made it difficult for the troops to operate - the frost reached up to 35 °. The desired results were achieved with a great loss of time, which, of course, did not help to improve the overall

provisions.

January 28 was roughly a repeat of the previous day. The 113th Rifle Division on that day went to the Kuznetsovka, Morozovo area, the 338th Rifle Division - to the Fedotkovo, Buslav, Abramovo area, the 160th Rifle Division from Iznoska moved in a forced march to the west. The 222nd, 110th and 93rd rifle divisions remained in their original places - in the area of Dubna, Trosna, Mochalniki - and continued to fight with the enemy, which so far did not give tangible results.

On January 31, the 33rd Army continued to fulfill the task assigned to it by the front commanders. The Germans, having concentrated in the area of Trosna, Mochalniki, Khimino, three and four infantry regiments of various divisions that had previously operated here, tried to cross the Shansky Zavod-Iznoski road with a strike on Iznoski and delay the advance of the main army grouping in a southwestern direction. On January 31, enemy aviation intensified its activities, subjecting the combat and marching formations of army units to fierce bombardment.

By this time, the 113th Rifle Division had reached Dashkovka with one regiment, with others - with Stukolov, with the third - with Zheltovka; The 338th Rifle Division occupied Gorby with the forward regiment; The 160th Infantry Division reached the area of Korshuntsy, Lyadnoe. The remaining divisions, fighting with the enemy, slowly moved to

the west. During January 31, the 33rd Army had to conduct a heavy defensive battle with the enemy grouping, which was trying to advance in a southerly direction from the Trosna, Himino region. This did not stop the advance of the advanced divisions of the army to Vyazma.

On the night of February 2, they took up their starting position for the attack

on Vyazma: • 113th Infantry Division - the Dashkovka area, Yastreby; the direction of the attack is on Boznia.

- 160th Rifle Division - forest southwest of Lyado; direction attacks - on Alekseevskoye.

- 338th Infantry Division - forest west of Vorobyovka; direction of attack - on Kazakovo, Yamskaya. On February 2, stubborn

battles for Vyazma began in the Alekseevsky area. On February 3, units of the 33rd Army near Vyazma (near Stogov) came into contact and established close contact with units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, which gave the struggle for Vyazma the character of a major battle.[136]

At the time of the deployment of the battles for Vyazma, behind those divisions that attacked Vyazma, the divisions of the 33rd Army were echeloned, advancing in a westerly direction with battles. The army units advanced

forward and the airborne troops thrown into the Znamenka area on January 20 intercepted important enemy retreat routes: the Kondrovo-Vyazma and Zanoznaya-Vyazma railways, the Yukhnov-Vyazma highway and the Temkino-Znamenka highway. The enemy's front was split; between its main groups - Gzhatsk and Yukhnov - were our troops. The Kalinin Front successfully developed the offensive against Vyazma from the north. His cavalry corps intercepted the railroad and highway west of Vyazma. The Germans were in a difficult position. For us, such an advance opened up the prospect of new offensive actions in the flank and rear of the main enemy groupings on the Western Front. But such a large advance of the 33rd Army into the depths of the Germans on a narrow front was fraught with the danger of a blow to our flanks. It had to be prevented; in connection with this, the question arose of expanding the

breakthrough and preventing the enemy from striking at our flanks. The struggle near Vyazma was a new page in the combat work of the 33rd

armies; its development is no longer within the scope of our description.[137]

Conclusions The offensive of the 33rd Army to Vyazma with the aim of splitting the enemy front deserves great attention due to the courage of the execution and the courage of the troops participating in it.

In the offensive, the following should be noted
basic moments:

1. There was some underestimation of the enemy's strength. The demand of the front "to withdraw the main forces of the army from the morning of January 19 to the area of Dubna, Zamytskoye" assumed that the section of the Vereya, Dubna, Zamytskoye front was free from the enemy. Meanwhile, large German forces appeared in this area, violating the planned execution by the army of its offensive

maneuver. 2. The fulfillment of the assigned task required from the army a strict regime of time and speed of action. Taking into account the distance (about 60 km) and the conditions of the situation, the army commander scheduled a speech for January 17th. But at that time there was still a struggle for Vereya, in connection with which the performance was made only on the night of January 19. Due to this, it turned out to be impossible to reach the appointed area by the deadline. The combat order of the army commander and the actual actions of the divisions turned out to be inconsistent with each other.

3. The movement of troops by order No. 021 of the commander of the 33rd Army was not organized enough; divisions with the main forces ran into the enemy, which indicates poor reconnaissance during the march. 4. In carrying

out the offensive, there was no strong leadership from the army command: some divisions strongly pulled ahead and ended up at Vyazma itself, others were detained by the enemy and managed to only slightly move away from Vereya. The army, like a needle, pierced the body of the enemy, but this injection was not fatal for him. By January 31, it stretched out in a strip occupying about 30 km along the front and about 80 km in depth.

5. Having assigned the 33rd Army such a responsible task as splitting the enemy front, the front command was unable to reinforce it with new units from the reserve; the breakthrough section was not expanded; in view of this, the flanks of the 33rd Army were all the time under the threat of a blow from the enemy. 6. The

33rd Army performed its task in severe frosts and deep snow cover; under such conditions, the forward units of the 113th, 338th and 160th rifle divisions covered a distance of 80–90 km in 12 days with battles. This further increases their services to the Motherland in such a responsible and honorable cause.

Chapter Eleven

Logistics and supply organization

As a result of the successful advance of the Red Army units in the second half of December, an urgent need arose for a new rear organization.

The state and organization of the rear of the front by December 25,

1941 The organization of the rear by December 25 was determined by the directive of the deputy front commander for rear of December 22, 1941. By this directive, the rear border of the front was established along the line: Aleksandrov, Ryazan, Ryazhsk; dividing line with the Kalinin Front: Reshetnikovo, Kotlyakovo, Sychevka stations and with the South-Western Front: Malevka, Plavsk, Belev (all points inclusive for the Western Front). The location of the front administrative stations and main bases did not change.

As before, it was believed that before the troops reached the Pogoreleye Gorodishche, Gzhatsk, and Myatlevo line, the existing location of front-line bases provided supplies for the troops.

As a maneuverable reserve in the hands of the deputy front commander on the Khimki, Pavshino, Odintsovo, Podolsk and Serpukhov lines, it was decided to create departments of front-line field warehouses with small supplies of food and grain fodder. On the left wing of the front, where, due to the rapid advance of troops, the conditions for transportation worsened, front-line field depots of fuel and ammunition were created in the Tula region.

At the same time, preparations were underway for the redeployment of front-line bases to the west of Moscow, to the areas where the head offices were located, which was supposed to be done with the withdrawal of troops to the Gzhatsk-Kaluga

line. The rear boundaries between the armies are indicated on the diagram. With regard to the organization of basing, the following

instructions were given: **1st Army** - an army base until December 24 in the Solnechnogorsk region, from December 26 - in the Klin region; the head office of the base on the ground is in the area of Teryaeva Sloboda, Suvorovo.

Army supply route: Solnechnogorsk, Klin, Vysokovsky, Teryaeva Sloboda, Suvorovo The administrative station of the army is Klin station.

20th Army -

an army base was ordered to be created in the Istra region; head offices of army field warehouses in the Lesodolgorukovo area. Army supply route -

Moscow-Volokolamsk highway together with the 16th Army. When receiving cargo in Moscow, before the restoration of the bridge near Istra, the army was allowed to use the highway: Tushino, Maryino, Pyatnitsa, Nudol, Novopetrovskoye, Volokolamsk. The administrative station of the army is the Istra station. **The 16th Army** - the army

base was ordered to be deployed in the Kholshcheviki area. In addition, it is proposed to have reserves on the ground in the Tarkhanovo region. Army

supply route: Volokolamsk highway (together with the 20th army) to Yadromin and further along the ground: Skirmanovo, Pokrovskoye, Tarkhanovo. The administrative station of the army is the Kholshcheviki station.

5th Army - the army base was ordered to be deployed in the area Kuntsevo, Golitsino; head offices - in the Dorokhov area.

Army supply route - Mozhaisk highway. administrative army station - Kuntsevo station.

33rd Army - the army base was ordered to be deployed in the area Vnukovo, Krekshino; the head offices are in the Bekasovo area.

Army supply route - Naro-Fominsk highway. The administrative station of the army is Vnukovo station. **43rd Army** - the army

base was ordered to be deployed in the area Podolsk, Domodedovo; head offices - in the area of Kamenka.

Army supply route - Domodedovo, Podolsk, Kamenka, Maloyaroslavets. The administrative station of the army, together with the 49th army - the station Podolsk. **The 49th**

Army - an army base on the exit of army units to the Maloyaroslavets, Kaluga line was ordered to be in the Sharapova Okhota, Serpukhov area; reserves on the ground - in the area of Chernaya Gryaz, Nedelnoye.

Army supply route - Serpukhov, Black Dirt, Vysokinichi. **50th Army** - an army base was ordered to be deployed in the Tula region; head offices - in the Aleksin area. In addition, it was proposed to have reserves on the ground in the areas of Krosna and Makarovo.

Army supply route - Tula, Aleshnya, Gryaznovo, Makarovo. The administrative station of the army is Tula station. The supply of the cavalry group of General Belov was entrusted to the apparatus of the 50th Army. To strengthen its vehicles, the front gave the 50th Army from its reserve 150 vehicles, of which 50 tanks. **10th Army** - ordered to have an army base in the Uzlovaya area,

Dedilovo; head offices - Yasnaya Polyana station, Shchekino.

Army supply route - Shchekino, Retinovka, Krapivna, Odoevo, Belev. The administrative station of the army is Shchekino station.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that the new base was organized in order to ensure the further offensive of our troops. The directive of the Deputy Front Commander for Logistics of December 22 eliminated the abnormal situation that had taken place during the first period of the offensive - the basing of several armies on one railroad or, conversely, the basing of one army on several roads, which led to a patchwork. Separate shortcomings were subsequently eliminated by the order of the front and the command of the armies. However, even after that, things were not going well with the basing of a number of armies. The organization of the rear area of the 20th Army, for example, cannot be considered successful. Its army base turned out to be located in the rear area of the neighbor on

the left, as a result of which the army was deprived of its supply route. The auxiliary army highway ran for a considerable length along the neighbor's rear area. All this created difficulties in the supply, meanwhile, by expanding the rear area of the 20 Army to the left, it was possible to eliminate the indicated

flaws.

In a number of armies, the directive of the Deputy Front Commander for Logistics was carried out belatedly, especially with regard to the deployment of the head divisions of the bases.

The state and grouping of the material resources of the front by December 25, 1941 By the end

of December, the difficulties of providing troops with ammunition, fuel and other means increased significantly due to severe frosts and snow drifts. Despite all

the efforts of the home front workers, who ensured the mass production of ammunition at the evacuated enterprises, and the measures taken to increase the supply of ammunition to the bases of the troops, their stocks were reduced at all levels. In addition to the difficulties with the supply, the decrease in reserves was caused by a sharp increase in their consumption in a number of armies.

On average, the troops and army bases had the most popular types of ammunition 1-1.5 ammunition. The prospects for their rapid replenishment were far from bright. The state of stocks in front-line bases on December 25, 1941 is shown in the table below, compiled according to the data of the 2nd department of the Front Artillery Chief's Office.

The front had absolutely no shots for 152-mm guns at their bases.

Название	Имелось (в тыс. шт.)	Среднесу- точный расход (в тыс. шт.)	Запланировано получить до конца месяца (в тыс. шт.)
50-мм мины	20,0	5,5	—
82-мм мины	11,5	7,0	—
107-мм мины	2,1	1,2	—
Выстрелы к 45 мм пушкам	50,0	3,5	—
Выстрелы к 76-мм пушкам полк. арт.	7,8	2,0	2,0
Выстрелы к 76-мм орудия м див. арт.	2,2	5,8	2,7
Выстрелы к 107-мм пушкам	7,9	0,3	—
Выстрелы к 122-мм гаубицам	7,6	5,1	12,0

The table shows that, with the exception of shots for 45-mm anti-tank and tank artillery and 50-mm mines, there was an **amount** of ammunition that was completely insufficient to ensure an uninterrupted supply of them to the troops. The actual situation turned out to be even more difficult, since from the planned supply of ammunition by the end of the month only

Part.

The provision of the Western Front with the most important and most popular types of ammunition on January 1, 1942 is shown in

table.

Название	Во фронтовой базе		В армейских базах*		В войсках	
	в тыс. шт.	в б/к	в тыс. шт.	в б/к	в тыс. шт.	в б/к
Ружейно-пулеметные патроны	7660	0,13	60000	1,1	68 910,0	1,05
50-мм мины	3,7	0,01	181,3	0,6	225,3	0,7
82-мм мины	0	0	49,3	0,26	114,2	0,6
107-мм мины	2,1	0,15	9,8	0,75	1,8	0,15
120-мм мины	0	0	5,8	0,58	6,2	0,6
Выстрелы к 45-мм пушкам	603	3,0	187,6	0,9***	250	1,0
Выстрелы к 76-мм пушкам полк. арт.	16	0,25**	16,7	0,25	69,3	1,1
Выстрелы к 76-мм орудиям див. арт.	0	0	19,7	0,25	101	1,0
Выстрелы к 107-мм пушкам	8	2,3	10,0	3,0	—	—
Выстрелы к 122-мм гаубицам	7,6	0,25	27,2	0,9	11,7	0,32
Выстрелы к 152-мм гаубицам	10,7	0,5	10,8	0,5	4,8	0,25

* Without the

50th Army. ** In a number of documents there are

other figures. *** Without data for the 50th, 49th and 20th armies. Actual security is much higher.

The table shows that the general provision of the front with mines of all calibers and shots for regimental and divisional artillery is insufficient. The front is also poorly supplied with ammunition for howitzer artillery, which is especially necessary in an offensive.

Individual armies were provided with ammunition even worse. In the warehouses of the 16th Army, by the end of January 1, 1942, there was not a single shot left for regimental artillery; there were only one thousand shots for divisional artillery and 400 shots for 152-mm howitzers. There were very few mines of large

calibers. Slightly better was the situation in the 33rd and 43rd armies. However, the latter did not have shots for 45-mm guns in army warehouses,

which put her in a dangerous position in the event of a massive tank attack from the enemy.

Until the second half of December, the provision of food and fuel to the front was quite normal. By the end of December, due to the difficulties of transportation and a sharp increase in fuel consumption, its reserves, especially motor gasoline, were reduced.

The security of the Western Front with fuel, food and grain feed on January 1, 1942 is shown in the tables.

The table shows that the general supply of the front with the most important types of fuel - gasoline and diesel fuel - was insufficient. The situation was complicated by the extremely uneven distribution of fuel among the armies. The 5th Army had 1.6 gasoline refills in army depots and about 2 refills in units. At the same time, in the neighboring 16th Army, which carried out very important operational tasks in January, there were only 0.4 gas stations in the army warehouses and about one gas station in the troops.

Название	Горючее*				
	во фронтовых складах		в армейских складах		в войсках (в заправках)
	в тоннах	в за- правках	в тоннах	в за- правках	
КБ-70 (крекинг-бензин)	136	0,5	2207	11,0	1-2
Автобензин	578	0,20	1521	0,75	
Дизельное топливо	799	1,75	663	1,3	

Название	Продовольствие и зернофураж				
	во фронтовых складах		в армейских складах		в войсках (в дачах)
	в тоннах	в дачах	в тоннах	в дачах	
Мука, сахар и хлеб	1673	3,2	4310	8,7	} 3-2,5
Крупа и макароны	240	2,4	325	3,25	
Сахар	207,3	7,0			
Жиры	12	0,2	42,7	1,1	
Мясо	191	0,7			
Концентраты	128/428**	—	492,5	1,5-2/ 2-3	
Овес	2297	—	2107		

* Without the 50th Army. The material part is determined as of December 23. ** In the numerator the first dish, in the denominator - the second.

Almost half of all army stocks of diesel fuel (270 tons, which was 4 refueling) were in the 20th Army, while the 16th Army had only 0.5 refueling, i.e. for 1.5 days of operation of vehicles with diesel engine. The slightest interruption in the supply, quite possible in the best weather and good road conditions, could put the 16th Army in a critical situation. With a generally sufficient supply of flour, cereals (including the second

course of concentrates) and sugar, food supplies in individual armies were very limited. On January 3, the 50th Army had only one flour dacha. Many armies of the front did not have sugar, fats and meat. In connection with the current situation, the Deputy Commander for Logistics, in his conclusions to the summary of January 1, 1942, wrote:

“It is necessary to urgently supply the front with mines, regimental, division shots, gasoline, fats, tobacco, sugar.

By January 1, 1942, the grouping of materiel at the disposal of the front was more even than at the beginning of December. Directive of the Deputy Front Commander for Logistics dated

On December 22, 1941, front-line and army reserves were planned to approach the troops, which is especially important in an offensive operation.

Ways, means of transportation and their

condition Within the boundaries of the front there were six main railway lines and three secondary ones that could be used for operational transportation and the transfer of military cargo. For transportation by road, there were seven good main highways and a number of minor ones of local importance. In addition to the highway, there were a large number of profiled dirt roads.

The army group of the center was best provided with roads, and comparatively worse - the wings. The rapid advance of our units on the left wing at the end of December and in the first half of January, the destruction by the enemy of railways and highways, as well as bridges on dirt roads, put the rear of the army of this wing in a difficult position. The further offensive of the armies of the center and

the right wing, which began in the second half of January, sharply raised the question of organizing the rapid restoration of railways, highways and dirt tracks along the entire front. Without this, it was impossible to ensure an uninterrupted supply of troops.

Winter conditions created a number of additional difficulties. The restoration of roads and bridges was slowed down due to snow drifts, which required the organization of snow protection and timely clearing them of snow.

The Front Logistics Administration did a great job of ensuring the rapid restoration of supply routes. In mid-December, the NKPS, which was engaged in the restoration of railways, was given specific tasks with instructions on how fast to restore this or that railway. At the same time, hard work was going on to form road-building and bridge-building battalions, as well as carpentry battalions. Severe cold and deep snow slowed down the restoration of roads, especially railways. railway section

Tula-Uzlovaya was opened for traffic on December 31, the section Uzlovaya-Volovo - only in the first half of January.

By January 10, 1942, traffic was restored on the Kalinin railway to the Manikhino station, Moscow Belorusskaya to the Kubinka station, Kievskaya to the Naro Fominsk station, Dzerzhinskaya to the Samozvanka station, on the Gorbachevo-Belev direction to the Bezhenka station. By January 20, traffic was restored on the Moscow-Donbass railway on the Ozherelye-Uzlovaya section, on Kalininskaya - to the Rumyantseva station, on Zapadnaya - to the Tuchkovo station, on Moscow-Kievskaya - to the Obninskoye station. The slow pace of restoration

of the railways led to the detachment of troops from their bases, to the lengthening of the supply route on the ground. As a result, the volume of road transport increased, at the same time, the conditions for its work became more and more difficult. The vehicles of the front did not increase in accordance with the growth in volume and the complication of its working conditions. The presence

and technical condition of the transport units of the front (in terms of GAZ-AA vehicles) are shown in the table (without motor transport of military and special units, services). It can be seen from the table that

in the first half of January the motor transport of the front increased by only 25%, while the range of delivery by highway and unpaved roads increased to a much greater extent. In addition, the onset of severe frosts and frequent snowstorms have sharply reduced the efficiency of vehicles.

Название	Автотранспорт		Гужетранспортные батальоны	
	всего имелось	из них на ходу	включившиеся в работу	не готовые к работе
К 1 января 1942 г.				
Фронт	1749	1448	—	—
1-я армия	365	310	—	—
20-я армия	300	200	—	—
16-я армия	233	233*	—	1
5-я армия	503	422	—	—
33-я армия	450	350	1	1**

Название	Автотранспорт		Гужетранспортные батальоны	
	всего имелось	из них на ходу	включившиеся в работу	не готовые к работе
43-я армия	774	774*	—	—
49-я армия	186	145	1	—
50-я армия	651	454	1	—
10-я армия	528	528*	1	—
61-я армия	—	—	—	—
Всего	5739	4864	4	2
К 15 января 1942 г.				
Фронт	2640	2063	1	—
1-я армия	409	368	1	—
20-я армия	265	145	—	—
16-я армия	191	163	1	1
5-я армия	560	560*	—	—
33-я армия	325	325*	1	—
43-я армия	927	810	—	—
49-я армия	431	367	1	—
50-я армия	526	443	—	1
10-я армия	872	747	1	—
61-я армия	—	—	—	2
Всего	7156	5991	6	4

* Due to the lack of data on the technical condition, all available vehicles are listed in the "on the go" column. It was accepted by the army in the formation area.

The doubling of the horse-drawn transport battalions did not introduce significant changes. Due to the poor care of the horses on the way and the insufficient supply of fodder, the battalions came to the front with a severely depleted horse staff. In the first half of January, there were actually no fully functional horse-drawn transport battalions. In the second half, the situation with horse-drawn transport improved: the battalions, which had harnesses and sledges, were fully involved in the work.

By January, the front's vehicles were distributed much better than in December. With the exception of the 49th Army, the left

the wing of the front was relatively better provided with vehicles than the rest of the directions. Three-quarters of the horse-drawn transport battalions were in the armies of the left wing, where they were most needed.

An exceptionally difficult situation was created with the provision of the front with special motor transport. In the fuel supply companies, 70-75% of the tank trucks required by the state were missing. To complete the ambulance transport, the front needed more than 400 additional vehicles. The situation in individual armies was even worse: in the 20th Army there were 15, and in the 5th Army there were only 10 ambulances instead of the 90 prescribed by the state. The command and rear workers were looking for a way out of the situation with the means of transportation in improving the work of available transport, in the wider use of railways and in attracting local horse-drawn transport to work in the military and army level. In the directive to the Military Councils of

the armies of December 22, No. 027, the front command demanded the full use of divisional vehicles, freeing it from property that was not needed at the moment. At the same time, the chiefs of the rear of the armies were ordered "to ensure the maintenance and maintenance of highways with two-way traffic with a well-established regulatory service. Care for clearing and repairing roads in the rear of the army, organizing a regulatory

service and lighthouses for them - all this was assigned to the commanders of the formations. The front command directive of December 22 was of exceptional

importance, but its implementation in the first half of January was hampered by the almost complete absence of road maintenance units. Without them, it turned out to be impossible to establish a clear order on the army supply routes, compliance with the traffic schedule. The lack of road construction parts also had a negative effect. The local population willingly responded to the call of the command to help the troops in repairing

roads, in organizing their snow protection and clearing debris and snow. But for rational use

the local population needed special people, i.e., road units, but the center did not send them.

In the second half of December, having received permission from the center, the front began to form road maintenance and other rear units from older people.

The formation of the road parts went pretty quickly. The presence and technical condition of the road parts of the front in January 1942 and their distribution are shown in the table below.

In the first half of January, there were only 5 road maintenance battalions, in the second half there were 19. With the exception of the 5th Army, all the rest now had road maintenance regiments.[138] This provided the material base for the creation of well-maintained roads and the establishment of a clear order on them, without which, as experience has shown, the effective use of road transport is unthinkable.

Название	Дорожно-эксплуатационные		Дорожно-строительные		
	полки*	батальоны	дорожно-строит. батальоны	мостостроит. батальоны	плотничные батальоны
К 1 января 1942 г.					
Фронт	2	—	1	—	1
ГУШДОР	—	—	6	2	—
1-я армия	—	—	2	—	—
20-я армия	—	1	2	—	—
16-я армия	—	—	2*	—	—
5-я армия	—	1**	1	—	—
33-я армия	—	1**	—	—	—
43-я армия	1	1	—	1	—
49-я армия	—	1	2	—	—
50-я армия	—	1***	—	—	—
10-я армия	—	1***	—	—	—
61-я армия	—	—	—	—	—

Название	Дорожно-эксплуатационные		Дорожно-строительные		
	полки	батальоны	дорожно-строит. батальоны	мостостроит. батальоны	плотничные батальоны
	К 15 января 1942 г.				
Фронт	2	—	1	—	1
ГУШДОР	—	—	2	1	—
1-я армия	—	1	2	—	—
20-я армия	—	1	2	1	—
16-я армия	—	2	1	—	—
5-я армия	—	—	3	—	—
33-я армия	—	2	1	1	—
43-я армия	1	1	2	1	—
49-я армия	—	1	2	1	—
50-я армия	1	—	—	1	—
10-я армия	—	1	—	—	—
61-я армия	1	—	—	1	—

* One of them was only received in the formation area. **

Arrived at Aprelevka station on 5 January.

*** January 5 arrived in the Tula region.

The number of road-building battalions did not increase in January, but in the second half of January they became more full-blooded, were better equipped with tools and special machines. In addition to those indicated in the table, the automobile and road department of the front had 14 construction battalions at its disposal, transferred by order of the front command from the military field construction.

The distribution of road maintenance and construction units among the armies turned out to be less purposeful. Of the armies of the left wing, which were especially in need of road-building battalions, only the 49th Army was adequately provided with them.

Summing up what has been said, it must be emphasized that the state of the material support of the front by December 25 was much worse than at the beginning of our counteroffensive. Nevertheless, the available reserves and the proximity of Moscow to its industry ensured the continuation of the offensive.

The rear apparatus, both front-line and army, has accumulated experience in working in winter conditions, has learned to work more clearly and purposefully. With the exception of the 10th Army, in the rest of the armies the main units of the rear apparatus were fully staffed by this time.

Organization of supply and supply

The directive of the front command to the Military Councils of the armies of December 22 stated: ***"Stop sloppiness in the expenditure of ammunition, fuel and food, achieving the most austerity and mastery calculation."*** This instruction was the basis for the organization of supply and delivery. The deputy

commander for rear demanded the maximum use of local food and feed resources of ammunition collected on the battlefield and taken from the enemy. In calculations and planning for the supply of troops, it was proposed to proceed from the economical expenditure of material resources. Therefore, the release of ammunition and fuel was carried out mainly according to the requirements from the units and armies, but not more than those established by the plan.

limits.

Determination of the limit, especially for ammunition and fuel for combat vehicles, is a complex and difficult business.

The deputy head of the artillery of the front for supplies set a certain coefficient for each army for January. Depending on the operational situation and the tasks performed, this coefficient was 1 in some armies, 0.8 in others, and 0.6 in others. This facilitated the calculation and supply, but did not sufficiently ensure the purposeful and economical use of ammunition. When breaking through a fortified zone in advance, not only more ammunition was required, but

also certain types of them (mainly howitzers, with a strong high-explosive effect). On the other hand, the use of large-caliber artillery in mobile battles, especially in winter conditions, as the experience of the December battles showed, is extremely difficult. Meanwhile, the accepted principle in planning the distribution of ammunition did not take into account this

fully.

At the end of December, the troops of the right wing and partly of the center approached the line fortified in advance by the enemy. Despite stubborn fighting, our units, starting from December 25, could not move forward. Against the left wing of the front and the right-flank armies of the center, the enemy did not have such serious fortifications, so they continued to advance without much difficulty.

The task of the front was to defeat the Mozhaisk-Vyazma grouping of the enemy. To this end, the right wing, operating in the southwestern direction, and the left wing, in the northwestern direction, were supposed to surround and destroy the enemy forces encircled by our center.

Based on the above operational situation and tasks, the chief of artillery supply for January planned in the established coefficients: for the 1st, 20th, 16th and 33rd armies, submit 1; for the 5th, 43rd, 10th armies and the group of General Belov - 0.8; for the 49th and 50th armies -

0.6. In the plan for the supply of ammunition developed on the basis of these instructions, the armies of the center and right wing were scheduled to give more shots for large-caliber and howitzer artillery than they were supposed to **according to** the established coefficient. Further amendments were made during the implementation of the plan. The 20th Army was additionally allocated 2.15 thousand 107-mm cannon shots and 2.1 thousand 120-mm mines, which were not previously planned for this army at

all. The supply of the armies of the front with ammunition and the actual execution can be seen from the plan placed on page 607.

When analyzing this plan, the following amendments should be taken into account. During our counter-offensive, a large amount of ammunition of domestic and German production, suitable for use by our materiel, was captured from the enemy or collected on the battlefield.

Part of the ammunition supplied directly to the troops from the warehouses of NCOs by vehicles of the Supreme High Command was not taken into account, therefore, was not reflected in the relevant documents. According to the logistics department of the 20th Army, army units received 50-mm mines by 7.5 thousand more, 107-mm cannon shots by 3.2 thousand and 122-mm howitzer shots by 7 thousand more than shown in front reports.

The plan for providing the front with ammunition for January and its

performance

Название	Выделено фронту		% выполнения*	Выделено армиям правого крыла		% выполнения	Выделено армиям центра		% выполнения	Выделено армиям левого крыла		% выполнения
	в тыс. шт.	в б/к		в тыс. шт.	в б/к		в тыс. шт.	в б/к		в тыс. шт.	в б/к	
Ружейно-пулеметные патроны	72500,0	1,12	40	23237,0	2,6	11	31000,0	0,95	6,5	12311,0	0,25	8
50-мм мины	440,6	1,3	12	40,0	0,87	5	157,0	2,0	8,5	75,5	0,74	0
82-мм мины	223,0	1,18	64	22,2	1,5	74	45,2	1,1	31,0	26,0	0,70	61
102-мм мины	37,6	2,9	135	6,2	2,3	130	13,7	3,0	36,0	4,9	1,1	89
120-мм мины	21,2	2,0	около 50	0,8	0,35	75	7,2	2,7	38	0,5	0,1	60
Выстрелы к 45-м пушкам	68,4	0,5	—	67,8	2,4	4	164,5	2,3	15,0	121,1	2,9	15
Выстрелы к 76-мм пушкам полк арт.	207,0	3,0	37	31,7	2,3	85	61,1	3,0	22,0	3,8	1,2	68
Выстрелы к 76-мм орудиям див. арт.	256,7	3,0	32,5	59,5	5,2	63	40,3	1,1	70,0	61,8	1,8	35
Выстрелы к 107-мм пушкам 1910/30 г.	4,6	1,3	123	—	—	—	4,9	3,3	4,0	—	—	—
Выстрелы к 122-мм гаубицам	56	1,7	120	5,0	1,0	50	28,5	3,1	88	8,3	0,9	25
Выстрелы к 152-мм гаубицам	34	1,7	190	12,1	3,0	108	20,2	2,4	90	7,1	1,2	110

*

Received before January 27 under the January plan plus received to January 18 according to the December plan.

High maneuverability, operations, sequential the concentration of forces and means, now in one, then in another sector or direction, was required when organizing the supply of maneuvering with reserves, means of transportation, rear units and institutions. In the 10th Army from January 1 to January 5, 1942, the composition of the ammunition increased by 50% for rifle and machine-gun cartridges and 50-mm mines, several times for 120-mm mines and for 152-mm howitzer rounds - by 70% . In the 5th Army, during the same time, the composition of ammunition for 82-mm mines decreased by 40%. Often a new material part arrived in the army, which did not exist before, or the previously available one was completely

eliminated. In the first case, an urgent supply of ammunition was needed for the newly arrived materiel, in the second, the seizure of ammunition and its transfer to another army. All this required changes in the adopted plan, increased the importance of administrative methods in the work of the rear.

Given the nature of modern warfare, which requires a flexible plan that can be amended on the fly in accordance with

changing conditions and circumstances, on the orders of the Deputy Front Commander for Logistics in January, five-day delivery plans for all types of supplies were drawn up. This made it possible to correct the situation with the material support of the troops by changing the volume of supply of goods to one or another army, without breaking the whole plan. The delivery plan, which was drawn up for a short period of time, made it possible to maneuver with supplies and means from the depths. The experience of operations in the initial period of the war showed that this was not enough. Often, as mentioned above, one or another materiel completely dropped out of a formation or army, while the ammunition for it remained at divisional exchange offices (DOP) or in army warehouses. If not in these cases, timely measures are taken to transfer the remaining ammunition to where they can be used, then there will be a danger of deadening valuable and necessary military equipment. A similar situation was sometimes created when ammunition depots were captured from the enemy, in which, along with German-made ammunition, our shells, previously captured by the enemy, ended up. Such a

case was in the 10th Army. On January 12, 1942, this army captured a large amount of ammunition at the Baryatinsky station. Among them, 19.2 thousand 82-mm mines, 11.5 thousand 76-mm rounds and 3.6 thousand 122-mm howitzer rounds were used to supply army units. But another 960 rounds for 76-mm guns, 920 rounds for 85-mm anti-aircraft guns, 5.2 thousand for 107-mm guns and 2.7 thousand for 152-mm howitzers could not be used in the army due to the lack material part. For almost a month, these ammunition lay at the Baryatinskaya station. Only on February 5 did the supplying authorities of the 10th Army ask the head of the 2nd department of the Office of the Front Artillery Chief to take

them for use.

This is not an isolated case. During the offensive of the Western Front in January, a large amount of ammunition suitable for use by our materiel was captured from the enemy. In the 20th Army, captured ammunition and ammunition collected on the battlefield (suitable for use by our materiel) amounted to: for rifle and machine-gun cartridges - about 30% of those received or arrived in the army with troops in January, 50-mm

about 20% for mines, more than 50% for 82- and 107-mm mines, and more than 30% for 122-mm howitzer rounds. It is impossible to leave the use of ammunition captured from the enemy to gravity; they must be included in the supply plan. At first,

the logistics and supply workers could not cope with the organization of maneuvering supplies. With the accumulation of experience in combat conditions, the situation has changed. In January, there were transfers of ammunition from one army (or formation) to another. In some cases, the excess was transferred to the field army depots. So, for example, on January 1, 1942, 720 mines were transported to a 120-mm mortar from the 412th mortar division to the head warehouse of one of the armies on the vehicles of the auto reserve of the Supreme High Command.

Despite a number of shortcomings in the operation of the artillery supply apparatus, at decisive moments the advancing troops were provided with ammunition in a timely manner. Overcoming the greatest difficulties, showing initiative and ingenuity, the supply artillerymen contributed to the defeat of the Nazi hordes near Moscow.

No less difficulties arose in the calculations and planning for the supply of fuel and lubricants to the troops. To draw up a real plan, it was necessary to take into account and provide for a large number of extremely variable factors. The supply of

motor gasoline at the end of December was hampered by the lack of rail tank cars, storage facilities for draining in field army depots, tank trucks and small containers for transporting troops along highways and dirt roads. These circumstances required a clear planning of delivery, economical use of available fuel supplies. At the end of December, the fuel supply

departments of the front and the army drew up a monthly plan for supplying units with fuel and lubricants. When compiling it, we proceeded from the availability of the material part by the end of the month and the average daily fuel consumption in the last ten days of December, taken for transport vehicles at 0.5 refueling and for combat vehicles - 0.3 refueling per day. In accordance with this, it was planned to submit 15 refuelings for each transport vehicle and 10 refuelings for each combat vehicle in January.

In addition to the monthly plan, in order to adjust it in accordance with the new situation and conditions, ten-day (half-monthly in some armies) delivery plans were drawn up. In some cases, they were drawn up carelessly, and therefore did not achieve their goal. The 5th Army in the second half of January was allocated by the front, as in the first half, 266 tons of diesel fuel. Meanwhile, the refueling of the army for this type of fuel from 53 tons on January 1, 1942 decreased by January 10 to 34 tons and by January 20 to 20.5 tons. t, meanwhile, she was given 266 tons. Such miscalculations by the planning authorities led to the loading of transport with the transportation of goods that were

not needed at the moment, to the accumulation of certain types of fuel in large quantities in the military and army rear. In early January, half of all the front's stocks of cracked gasoline (KB-70) ended up in the 43rd and 20th armies. In the first of them there were 27 gas stations, in the second - 24 gas stations, which provided the two-month need of the 43rd and 20th armies in KB-70. In addition to the danger of storing such a quantity of fuel in close proximity to the front, sending

excess fuel to the army and formations caused downtime for rail tank cars and tank trucks and contributed to its uneconomical spending.

There were no major difficulties in supplying the troops with food and fodder in January. The supply from the deep rear, combined with the organized use of local funds, completely covered the needs of the troops. Separate interruptions in the nutrition of the troops were caused by insufficiently organized work of the quartermaster and rear apparatus. At first, some of the workers of this apparatus had the doubt that where the fascist robber army visited, nothing could be obtained from local funds. In reality, this was not entirely true. Away from the main roads, where the Germans were afraid to go, vegetables, fodder and other products were sometimes stored in large quantities. Even in the cities, the Germans, who did not find support among the Soviet population, could not fully use the available reserves. In the warehouses of the city of Istra, after the Germans, one thousand tons of salt remained. Meanwhile, the 16th Army, which occupied this city, was in great need of salt before it was brought from the rear.

Where the commissariat and logistic workers showed initiative and assertiveness in finding means and methods for ensuring regular food for the troops, they succeeded. Despite the exceptional difficulties of transporting and organizing preparations in the conditions of a rapid offensive, the command and workers of the commissary apparatus of the 217th Infantry Division (50th Army) managed to ensure uninterrupted food for the soldiers and commanders. During heavy drifts, vehicles got stuck, resulting in a danger of a power outage. The division rear workers got out of this difficulty by mobilizing civilian sledge-drawn vehicles (67 carts), and this ensured the timely delivery of the necessary products.

In the troops of the 33rd Army (with the exception of the 222nd and 338th Rifle Divisions, in which there were isolated cases of food shortages), soldiers and commanders regularly received hot food twice a day. To achieve this position, the home front workers had to overcome very great difficulties. Especially difficult was the material support of the actions of mobile groups. In mid-January, the Front Logistics Directorate reported to the center:

“The transports with ammunition and fuel sent to [General Belov's] group cannot break through; Belov's vehicles also remained in the Podkopaievo area. The supply of the group with ammunition, fuel, food is possible only by air.

The rear workers of this group found another way out. They mobilized the local horse-drawn transport. Where not only motor vehicles, but also regular horse-drawn vehicles got stuck, local collective farmers found field and forest roads, along which they brought the necessary goods to the troops.

Material support for the breakthrough of the 20th Army on the Lama River The rear apparatus of the 20th Army, almost completely staffed by workers called up from the reserve, had little knowledge of the rear service technique, and was not cohesive enough. As a result, the rear of this army worked unsatisfactorily in December;

disorganized, the location of divisional exchange offices (DOP) often did not correspond to the operational situation, and the troops sometimes did not know about their location. As a result, even the troops received bread intermittently. In the 331st Rifle Division they did not give out bread for two days.

The front helped the army with its motor transport, sent workers who on the spot taught those called up from the reserve the technique of rear service. This was of great importance not only for eliminating shortcomings in the current work of the rear of the army, but also for cultivating rear workers and forging together a rear apparatus. With the appointment of several experienced logistic workers to the 20th Army, its logistic apparatus turned into a fully functional body that could independently organize the material support of the army troops. The material security of the 20th Army at the beginning of January did not deviate

from the average norm along the front. She had in the troops and field army warehouses (PAS) ammunition - 1.5-2 ammunition, fuel 3 refueling, food (excluding fats) - 6-8 summer cottages, grain fodder - 4-6 summer cottages. Meanwhile, a complex and responsible operational task was entrusted to this army. After repeated attempts to break through the enemy's fortified zone on a broad front, the command decided to concentrate the strike force on the sector of the 20th Army. For this purpose, most of the forces of the 16th Army were transferred to its composition and at the same time measures were taken to replenish its units to the state. Preparations for the breakthrough operation were ordered to begin on January 6 and end on January 8.

The command and rear workers had to do a lot of work. To fulfill the operational task received by the 20th Army, a large amount of ammunition was required, especially for howitzer, large- and medium-caliber artillery with a large high-explosive action of the projectile. But just with them, the army turned out to be poorly provided. The ammunition supply limit set for January did not eliminate this shortcoming.

Availability of ammunition in the 20th Army by January 1, 1942.

Название	Состав боевого комплекта	Имелось в войсках и полевых армейских складах	Лимит на январь
Ружейно-пулеметные патроны	4435,5	11701,0	18677,0
50-мм мины	26	37,1	80,1
82-мм мины	17,9	18,6	32,2
107-мм мины	0,5	0,15	1,9
120-мм мины	0,7	1,5	1,5
Выстрелы к 45-мм пушкам	12,2	36	79,1
Выстрелы к 76 мм пушкам полк. арт.	5,2	4,5	21,0
Выстрелы к 76-мм орудиям див. арт.	10,8	15,6	39,1
Выстрелы к 122-мм гаубицам	1,3	3,0	3,9
Выстрелы к 152-мм гаубицам	11,1	2,15	4,7

Intense fighting in the first days of January exhausted the ammunition. By January 4, the 20th Army turned out to be worse provided with mines (with the exception of 120-mm) and shots for divisional artillery than by December

25. The basing conditions were also unfavorable for the army. The rear area of the army complicated the organization of transportation. At first, the army did not have its own road; an additional supply route for a considerable distance passed through the rear area of the neighboring army. The situation was better with the provision of the army with road units. She had one road maintenance battalion and two road construction battalions. These parts were quite enough to establish the necessary order on the supply routes, to ensure timely repair of roads. Army vehicles provided her with the supply of daily

needs. She had (in terms of GAZ-AA cars) 1,500 vehicles, of which about 300 were in army transport. With the increase in snow cover, there was a need for horse-drawn transport, as the work of vehicles on country roads became more and more difficult. The command and workers of the rear of the army had to do a lot of work in a short time. On January 6, 1942, the

front allocated 5.5 thousand 107-mm and 1.7 thousand 120-mm mines for the army. For regimental artillery, 16.1 thousand shots were issued, for divisional artillery - 5.2 thousand, for 122-mm howitzer - 7.3 thousand and for 152-mm howitzer 10 thousand shots; in addition, for the newly transferred to the army 107-mm.

cannon artillery - 5.4 thousand and 203-mm - 2 thousand shots. This is more than was allocated for the 20th Army according to the January plan, but since the number of guns increased even more, the supply of combat sets remained below the target.

January plan.

The leave for the army of fuels and lubricants and food was increased. In addition, there were large shipments of winter uniforms and other property. Preparations for

the material support of breaking through the enemy position began with the issuance of Order No. 11 on the rear on January 7, 1942. By the beginning of the breakthrough operation, it was ordered: to create stocks on the ground in the amount of 2.5 combat kits, to bring fuel supplies in the troops to two and in army field warehouses to one gas station, to have 5 dachas in the troops and 2 dachas in the food battalion; unload sanitary facilities, bring sanitary evacuation facilities closer to the troops; in the future, be ready to serve daily at 0.25 combat

kit.

The army base until January 9 remained in the area of Nakhabino station, the branch of the field fuel depot - in the area of the intersection of the highway and the road to Chismeny. From January 9 to 15, it was proposed to have a base in the Istra region. The head of military communications of the army was ordered to take measures to develop the Dolgorukovo and Volokolamsk stations, preparing

them as base areas. Prior to the start of the operation, divisional and brigade exchange offices remained in place; with the exit of units to the Shakhovskaya meridian, they moved to the Bol line. Isakovo, Kuryanovo, Chubarovo.

The main route of delivery and evacuation: Nakhabino, Volokolamsk. For sledge and tractor transportation:

- 1) Denkovo, Shilovo, Novo-Pavlovskoye, Shitkovo;
- 2) Chismeny, Gusenevo, Shishkino, Lyskovo, Chentsy, Gorki, Pushkari, Ivanovskoye and

Mikhailovskoye. The automobile and road department of the army was ordered to organize a regulatory service on the indicated routes, having a post and a team of 10-15 people for each kilometer to repair and clear the road.

In the areas of bridges, it was proposed to have a supply of building materials. By January 8, prepare workarounds in all places that could be destroyed.

The release of material resources was scheduled for January 7th. In order to have time to bring everything necessary to the units in time, the commanders of military formations were ordered to force the receipt and transfer of ammunition, fuel and food forage, using all available vehicles for this. The rear apparatus did a great

job. Despite the erroneousness of the initial data (it was supposed to receive 4 combat sets for the operation) when calculating the provision of troops with ammunition, the workers determined the amount of material resources needed, the amount of work to be done and distributed it in accordance with the plan of the operation in time.

Ensuring the uninterrupted supply and efficient use of vehicles was put at the center of all the concerns of the army logistics department. This was an absolutely correct decision, but, as we have seen above, it was supposed to expend an extremely large amount of energy to implement it. Very valuable and

instructive is the concern of the Logistics Directorate for concentrating a supply of building materials in the bridge areas and creating detours in advance.

In fact, not everything went as planned. First of all, there was not enough transport to transport parts of the reinforcement and replenishment, as well as to transport everything necessary for the troops. The delivery of only ammunition and fuel allocated to the army required 1.5 thousand vehicles. The same amount was needed to bring the daily dacha and replenish mobile food supplies to the norm.

The developed material support plan had major shortcomings. It lacked a clear definition - when and what, by what means, from where and where it is transported, who, where and how provides transportation. As a result, for the first few days, the existing vehicles did not work well, the roads were not cleared of snow in time. The automobile and road department of

the army was late with the delivery of reinforcements allocated to the army, as well as the necessary material resources. By January 8, only half of the replenishment had been transported. IN

army artillery regiments, - informs the command of the army to the front, - by this time there were only from 0.2 to 0.75 ammunition. There was even less ammunition in the military artillery regiments.

“It was only in the evening that the units sent a transport to receive ammunition at the station. Nakhabino, where only by this time ammunition

had been brought. In the final part of the report, the army command asked the front commander to postpone the army's offensive to the next day. This was allowed, and in fact the offensive began on 10 January. The

rear apparatus took into account its mistakes and subsequently worked more clearly and purposefully. By the end of January 11, 1942, it was clear that the army had managed to break through the enemy defenses. This opened before her the possibility of developing an operational maneuver. In order to materially support the further actions of the army troops, on January 11, a new rear order was issued under No. 012, according to which the army base was transferred to the Istra region and at the same time accelerated work was to be carried out to restore the railway

section to Volokolamsk. On January 11, the heads of military branches, services and supply departments were ordered to send reconnaissance groups from field army depots to Istra to determine the area for the placement of salaries in such a way that by the end of that day they would have their representatives there with work teams in full readiness to receive and issue cargo in the new area. To do this, it was proposed to transfer supplies there by road from

the Nakhabino station. The head offices of field army salaries - food, fuel and ammunition - were ordered to be deployed in the Volokolamsk region by 8 o'clock on January 12. In order to keep

mobile field bakeries and bakeries in reserve, the army quartermaster set up bread baking in stationary bakeries in Volokolamsk and Novo-Petrovsky. In case of moving forward, on January 19, special intelligence was sent to Shakhovskaya to find out the production capabilities and the condition of the former bakeries. For repair and

restoration of the bakeries destroyed by the enemy in the armies, working detachments of specialists were created.

During the breakthrough of the enemy's defensive zone and during the subsequent offensive, the rear apparatus made extensive use of creating reserves on the ground, thanks to which the army was supplied uninterruptedly. Despite the exceptionally difficult conditions for the supply, the

army did not experience serious difficulties either with ammunition or with other materiel during the operation to break through the enemy's defensive line and during the subsequent offensive. This was possible because a significant part of the needs of the troops, not only in vegetables, fodder and food, but also in ammunition, was covered by procurement from local funds, collection on the battlefield and trophies. Experience in the use of local resources by home front workers

deserves careful study.

Consumption and receipt of ammunition in the 20th Army in January 1942

Название	Прибыло в армию (в тыс.)		Израсходовано			К 12 января имелось в войсках и полевых складах арм и боевых комплектов
	подвезено из складов и прибыло с войсками	захвачено у противника и собрано на поле боя	за январь	за 10–11 января		
				в тыс. шт.	в б/к	
Ружейно-пулеметные	5593,0	2850,0	6361,5	230,3	0,06	2,3
50-мм мины	29,0	7,0	29,0	0,3	0,01	2,9
82-мм мины	24,0	28,0	23,7	2,2	0,12	0,3
107-мм мины	8,5	0,4	6,2	1,2	2,8	3,0
120-мм мины	4,9	0,4	8,4	0,9	1,3	5,0
45-мм выстрелы	37,7	3,0	26,8	3,7	0,3	0,8*
Выстрелы к 76-мм пушкам полк. арт.	21,2	1,8	13,2	3,0	0,57	2,6
Выстрелы к 76-мм орудиям див. арт.	30,2	0,8	11,8	6,7	0,67	1,1
Выстрелы к 107-мм пушкам	4,5	5,3	7,1	2,0	1,5	—
Выстрелы к 122-м гаубицам	5,7	3,3	6,3	1,4	0,5	1,7
Выстрелы к 152-мм гаубицам	15,2	—	13,1	3,4	0,4	3,5

* Only in field army warehouses.

The table shows that the number of 82-mm mines captured from the enemy and collected on the battlefield more than covered their monthly consumption, for 107-mm cannon rounds their monthly consumption was covered by more than two-thirds, and for 122-mm howitzer - more than half. At the

same time, this table shows the specific weight of the consumption of certain types of ammunition when breaking through the enemy's defensive position and on other days of the battle. Rifle-machine-gun cartridges during the breakthrough of the enemy's defense were spent relatively less per day than on other days. A different picture is obtained in the expenditure of artillery shots - especially divisional, 107-mm cannon and 122-mm howitzer. The

rear apparatus coped with its task. The Military Council of the Army recognized the work of the rear as satisfactory, and presented the most distinguished workers for a government award.

This success did not come easily. In order to achieve an uninterrupted supply of troops, the rear workers had to overcome the greatest difficulties caused by severe frosts, frequent blizzards, which disrupted the supply and evacuation and made it extremely difficult to organize the repair of materiel. All these difficulties

were overcome thanks to close contact in the work of the headquarters and the rear department, as well as numerous links of the rear apparatus among themselves. The command during the operation set clear tasks for its rear, through the headquarters kept it aware of the operational situation and its assumptions. In turn, the leading workers of the rear used every opportunity to get acquainted with the operational situation. In his report to the Military Council of the front, the deputy commander of the army for logistics claimed that his employees **"are always aware of the operational situation."** Lively leadership and strict control by the Army

Logistics Directorate were even more important. **"On all issues of the rear service,"** the report said, **"the strictest control was established through personal communication with units, formations and heads of departments."**

The front-line apparatus rendered great assistance in organizing the work of the rear of the 20th Army. Its representatives taught by showing army workers. On this experience, which has practical significance, one should learn to lead subordinates.

The successful completion of breaking through the enemy's defensive line on the Lama and Ruza rivers and the continued advance of the left-flank armies opened up broad operational opportunities for the front. To ensure a further offensive, the deputy front commander for rear issues issued a new directive No. 029 on January 17. This directive ordered the

supply departments to deploy the main reserves of the front in the Moscow region and to the west of it. Otherwise, the organization of the rear remained the same, with the exception of the 10th Army, which was ordered to deploy its base in the Gorbachevo region, and the head offices of field warehouses in the area of Manaenki and Bezhenki stations.

The 61st Army, again transferred to the front, was ordered to deploy its base in the area of \u200b\u200bArsenyevo station, an army administrative station to Gorbachevo station. In fact, only train flights could be delivered to the Arsenyevo station, and even then only at the end of January.

In order to save on motor transport, it was forbidden to send army vehicles to front-line bases. Satisfied administrations and departments were ordered to organize the delivery of the material resources necessary for the armies to the army administrative stations, and from there the delivery of supply cargoes should be carried out by rail. For the maximum use of railway transport in the areas of Aleksin and Belev, transshipment points were organized, subordinated directly to the front. Later, such a base was created in the area of Khanino station. Of greatest interest was the work of the rear on the material support of the armies of the left wing in the

second half of January. Below, we will deal mainly with the work of the rear of the front and the left-flank armies.

Organization of supply and transportation in the armies of the left wing The successful advance of the armies of the left wing and the delay in the restoration of railways and bridges on highways and dirt roads led to the backlog of army bases, to an increase in difficulties in supply. In a number of armies, the apparatus did not provide an uninterrupted

supply of troops. In order to streamline the supply and delivery on the left wing of the front, on January 18, the front's deputy commander for logistics issued directive No. 030, according to which the automobile and road department of the front was to create a front-line military road No. 2 along the route: Khanino, Przemyśl, Babynino, Meshchovsk, Mosalsk. At the disposal of the head of the military highway (VAD) No. 2, 150 vehicles were allocated from the front's car reserve.

In order to bring front-line stocks closer to the troops, it was ordered to create a front-line transshipment base in Khanin with branches of field warehouses: artillery, fuel, food and fodder, and be ready to hand over to the troops by the end of January 20, 1942. In the area of Meshchovsk, a head department of a front-line base was created with the same warehouses.

At the same time, Deputy Commander of the Front for Logistics, Major General of the Quartermaster Service Vinogradov, ordered the head of the organizational and planning department of the logistics department

Front to send their representatives to the place to control and help army workers in the implementation of the directive on the rear for No. 030. With their assistance, it was possible to arrange the transport of goods along the Tula narrow-gauge railway, Khanino station in the amount of 250-300 tons per day.

Great difficulties were also encountered in arranging transportation along the military highway No. 2. The automobile and road department of the front did not allocate the assigned number of vehicles. The technical condition of the cars sent to the command of the head of the military highway turned out to be so low that half of them went for repairs. In addition, snow protection was not organized on the highway, timely snow removal, there were no adjustment posts, gas stations and repair points.

At the request of the workers of the front, for the organization of snow protection, a certain section of the road was attached to each of the nearest villages, elders were allocated, who were responsible for organizing the population and its timely appearance at their site. The duty of the seniors was to monitor the implementation of standards and the quality of work. With the arrival of two horse-

drawn transport companies at the disposal of the head of military highway No. 2, the latter were sent to serve the supply to the west from Mosalsk, and vehicles (including General Belov's groups) were planned to be used to work on the highway. However, the head of the rear of the group did not agree with this and sent the horse-drawn transport companies back

to work on the military highway, and left his own road transport. Deployment of warehouse departments in the head department of the base was delayed. Only by the end of January 22 were the main warehouses ready for the troops to

leave. This greatly improved the conditions of supply. Still, the main interest lies in the ways of creating new supply chains.

The apparatus of the transshipment base and the head office of the front base was staffed by employees of the department of the head of the Tula front base. The workforce and vehicles were completed by the transfer of a work and vehicle company

43rd Army. Thus, through the maneuvering of available forces, work was ensured at three points.

This is not the only case when one state provided work in several points operating independently.

A group of quartermaster 1st rank Sergeev did a great job of establishing order in the transshipment base at Khanino station. The experience of the operation of the transshipment base at Khanino station has shown that with skillful dispersal of stocks and observance of camouflage discipline, it is quite possible to create stocks in an open terrain.

Of great interest is the supply system in the armies of the left wing. While the detachment of troops from their bases was more or less uniform and did not exceed 100 km, a system of parallel operation of army and divisional vehicles was used, delivering cargo to divisional exchange offices (DOP), less often directly to the troops. With the increase in detachment from bases in individual armies or divisions, a mixed method of transportation began to be used. Typical for the last reception is the organization of supply in the 10th Army. The order for the rear of the 10th Army

of January 6, 1942 stated that from the Khanino station, food for the 324th, 325th and 326th rifle divisions should be supplied by army transport to the divisional exchange offices in full, for the 323rd rifle division - half, and the rest The division takes half of it with its own vehicles. The divisions based at the stations of Shchekino and Bezhenka (239, 330, 328 and 322 rifle divisions), all cargo, except for ammunition, had to be transported by their own vehicles. Ammunition for all divisions was brought up by army vehicles. With a large separation (more than 100 km) of troops from their bases, it is most advantageous to use army transport (reinforced in some cases from the

front's auto reserve) to form forward sections of an army base on the ground, from where cargo could be picked up by divisional vehicles and delivered to divisional exchange points. Such an order of delivery frees army vehicles from searching for divisional exchange offices, and also excludes the possibility of delaying army vehicles in units.

These delays were, as is known, a fairly frequent occurrence and caused a sharp decrease in the efficiency of army and front-line transports.

Organization of Logistics Control in an Offensive Operation

The advance of the armies, especially rapid on the left flank of the front, where at times an extremely difficult operational situation was created, the lack of communications and winter conditions made it extremely difficult to control the rear. The inevitable stretching and lagging of the rear during the offensive required the workers of the rear service to show ingenuity, flexibility and initiative in management. In order to bring the logistics leadership closer to the troops in a number of armies, small operational groups were created from rear workers, located at the command post. These groups were obliged to find out the degree to which the troops were provided with everything necessary, their need for certain means, and to transfer the collected information to the second echelon of the army headquarters for taking appropriate measures.

Operational groups, giving flexibility and mobility to the work of the rear, thereby brought great benefits to the troops. However, in some cases, when no specific tasks were assigned to the workers who were part of the operational group, when their activities were not controlled, the operational groups of the logistics control not only did not contribute, but, on the contrary, interfered with the timely material support of the troops. An example is the operational group of the 49th Army, which showed inactivity and indiscretion, which led to interruptions in the supply.

The enthusiasm for assigning a large number of representatives to different places led to the dispersion of the workers of the organizational planning department. Meanwhile, in terms of the volume and nature of the work of this department, a well-knit and well-coordinated team is required, in which everyone, in close cooperation with others, provides his own area of work. Therefore, the creation of task forces or the allocation of individual workers to perform specific tasks on the ground must be done with due diligence.

Organization of the transfer of command and rear of the 16th Army

The experience of organizing and carrying out the transfer of large combined-arms formations, directorates and rear services is of great interest to the commanding staff of the Red Army. A highly maneuverable war often creates a need for such transfers, and the side that makes them more covertly and quickly, with less effort and resources, gains a great advantage. Therefore, the casting of command and rear of the 16th Army from the right wing of the front to the left, carried out in the second half of January, under difficult road conditions, deserves study.

The order of the front command on the transfer of command and rear of the 16th army from the area of the station Lesodolgorukovo, Nov. Petrovskoye to the south, to the area of Kudrinskaya station (later to the area

of Khanino, Babynino) followed on January 21, 1942. It was proposed to carry out the transportation of personnel and part of the property by order with their own vehicles. All supplies, with the exception of fuel, transferred to the neighboring army, were to be transported by rail. The start of the transfer was scheduled for January 23.

Having received an order from the front, the rear apparatus of the 16th Army developed a plan that indicated: who, when and what to do, route, time, order of formation of columns and their performance from the spot. Refueling, repair and nutrition points were prepared on the designated routes. In order to prevent the accumulation of cars during delays and ensure the continuity of traffic, the convoy did not exceed 20 cars. However, due to weak control over the ongoing preparations and insufficient management of the departure of the columns, this plan was disrupted from the very beginning, as a result of which the transfer to the new area was completed with a delay of 10-12 days. The deployment of the apparatus and rear units of the 16th Army in the new area was hampered by frequent changes in the destination. The area of the Kudrinskaya station indicated at first on the road was changed to the area of Khanino, Babynino, and then - Shchekino, Odoevo, Kozelsk.

The transfer of the 16th Army to the left wing of the front required a new organization of logistics and supplies. The directive of the front on the rear of January 26, No. 033, gave the necessary instructions: the 10th Army was based at the head office of the front base in Meshchovsk.

Logistic institutions and units of this army, with the most necessary property, were relocated to the Pletnevka area, the Kudrinskaya station in order to restore the Naro-Fominsk-Sukhinichi railway and organize an army base there. To strengthen the means of transportation on

military highway No. 2, the deputy commander of the front ordered the head of the logistics of the 10th Army to transfer an auto company to the command of the head of this road; The 16th Army, which found itself without its vehicles, was temporarily subordinate to the automobile battalion and the horse-drawn battalion. At the same time, the supply of units of the 16th Army (consisting at that time of five rifle divisions) was entrusted to the rear apparatus of the 10th Army, which was still insufficiently cobbled together.

Supplying Tank Units in Winter Conditions As the

frost intensified and snow cover increased, the supply of tank units became more and more difficult. Often the situation forced them to supply tanks with ammunition and refuel in areas or collection points. There were cases of refueling vehicles with fuel at the starting lines for the attack. Vehicles (even cross-country vehicles) often could not get through to their tanks. Tractors "Comintern" and "ST-35" turned out to be more passable.

In cases where they could not approach the tanks, ammunition and fuel were towed on sleds behind the tanks.

Ordinary sleds were not suitable for this, but also specially built often fell apart or turned over, leading to the loss of much-needed ammunition and fuel and lubricants.

A major drawback of the tractor and tank used as a tractor for the transport of materiel was the loud noise they made, which was difficult to disguise. Circumstances, however, sometimes demanded the strictest secrecy when supplying ammunition and fuel to tanks, for example, when tanks were in ambush and needed to be refueled. In such cases, they usually resorted to horse-drawn vehicles, which have better maneuverability than any of the tractors, and make almost no noise. In special cases (when careful camouflage was required), ammunition and fuel were brought to the tanks on small sleds moved with the help of people.

With all the variety of vehicles used in winter conditions for the delivery of ammunition and fuel to tanks, horse-drawn vehicles turned out to be the most successful and most often used. Based on the experience accumulated by the 26th Tank Brigade over a long period of time, the Deputy Commander of the 43rd Army for Armored Forces wrote in his report:

***“When tanks operate in isolation from highways, the best means of delivering fuel and ammunition is horse-drawn transport; it is silent and passable everywhere.*”**

For a tank battalion, according to its calculations, it is necessary to have 5 sleds, which are quite enough to serve the battalion's actions within a radius of

20–30 km. During the fighting that the 5th tank brigade was conducting (from December 18 to January 9), fuel and ammunition were brought to it exclusively by horse-drawn sledges. The deputy commander of the 20th Army for armored forces considered it necessary to attach sledge-drawn vehicles to tank units.

The January offensive of the Western Front put forward a number of specific tasks for the rear workers. The total volume of cargo delivered to the troops has increased, and their nature has also changed. For example, the consumption of fuels and lubricants has increased significantly. On some days, up to 1 refueling of gasoline was spent, instead of the average daily consumption in December, 0.4 refuelings. On the contrary, the consumption of ammunition was significantly reduced. In addition, a large amount of captured ammunition was used. These two circumstances explained the fact that if during the December offensive (from December 6 to December 22, 1941) the average daily supply of ammunition to the front was 861 tons, then during the January offensive (from December 22, 1941 year to January 31, 1942) it was only 389 tons.

The consumption of ammunition in combat kits during the December and January offensives is shown in the table

Название	Расход фронта		Расход в отдельных армиях в январе	
	в де-кабре	в ян-варе*	в 10-й армии	в 20-й армин
Ружейно-пулеметные патроны	0,7	0,5	0,4	1,6
50-мм мины	1,4	0,7	0,25	1,1
82-мм мины	1,7	1,0	0,75	1,3
107-мм мины	2,1	1,9	2,4	11,5**
120-мм мины	2,0	1,5		
Выстрелы к 45-мм пушкам	1,0	0,6	0,35	2,2
Выстрелы к 76-мм пушкам	1,8	1,0	1,25	2,5
полк арт.				
Выстрелы к 76-мм орудиям див. арт.	1,7	1,0	1,0	1,2
Выстрелы к 107-мм пушкам	6,7	6,0	—	5,2
Выстрелы к 122 мм гаубицам	3,5	2,3	1	4,5
Выстрелы к 152-мм	5,0	2,6	1,8	4,0

* For the first 20 days calculated based on actual consumption, for the remaining 10 days - according to the average daily consumption in the first 20 days.

** The number of large-caliber mortars in the army since January 7 has increased significantly more than shown in the statement, while the calculation of ammunition consumption has been made according to the state of the material part as of January 1.

To illustrate the consumption of ammunition in individual armies, armies were taken that were in sharply different operational situations. The 10th Army fought mainly maneuver battles and had no serious enemy fortifications against it, while the 20th Army broke through the enemy's fortified positions in advance. This explains that the consumption of ammunition in the 10th Army, with a few exceptions, is lower than the average front, and in the 20th Army - significantly

higher.

Conclusions In an offensive operation, as the experience of the Western Front shows, the rear is required to be constantly ready to maneuver with reserves, rear units and supply routes. During the operation, command and

the head of the rear increasingly felt the need to create a maneuverable stock of all types of material and vehicles. In the absence of such stocks, they resorted to redirecting cargo or transferring forces, means and supplies from one army to another. But still it was not a way out; the high maneuverability of modern operations required the presence of a maneuvering reserve in all links.

The bulkiness of the modern rear apparatus and the variety of its duties necessitated the separation of individual units of the rear to a considerable depth. In order to ensure live communication with the command and the troops, operational groups for the control of the rear were created.

The offensive at the end of December and in January, which had the character of pursuit on the left wing, required much less ammunition than the counteroffensive. At the same time, the bulk of the ammunition was used up in the armies of the center and the right wing, which were forced to break through the defensive positions created in advance by the enemy. The rear apparatus of the

front and armies worked in January more clearly and purposefully than in December. By extensive use of local funds (up to captured ammunition), the logistics and supply workers replenished the material resources allocated, but not sent to the front. It was only towards the end of January that their lack of armies began to show sharply.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized that the relatively small expenditure of materiel (especially ammunition) in the battle for Moscow was the result of both the general, typical for the stage of the war being analyzed, and the specific conditions that prevailed near Moscow at the end of 1941 and at the beginning of 1942. This must be taken into account when calculating the material support of modern operations.

Chapter Twelve

Conclusion for the January period

1. The operational and strategic position of the parties in the Moscow strategic direction by January 1942 was sharply different. The troops of the Red

Army as a result of the December defeat of the Germans near Moscow (in particular, the defeat of their strike flank groups) received freedom of action and were able to continue the further offensive in order to completely destroy the Nazi forces opposing the Western Front. From the end of December, the armies of the Western Front carried out this offensive from the line of the Lama, Ruza, Nara, and Oka rivers. By this time, units of the Red Army had already suffered serious losses, their fatigue with long and continuous battles had an effect; the harsh winter left its chilling imprint on the actions of the troops. However, the favorable operational situation and the high political and moral state of the Red Army units made it possible to count on further successes of our troops in January. 2. The Nazi troops, defeated near Moscow, having lost a large number of people and materiel

(including almost all tanks), fell back to the west under the blows of the Red Army. The situation was more difficult for the Germans on the flanks, who were the most defeated and pursued by large forces of the Red Army. The center suffered less, and the situation there at first was more stable. At the line of Lama, Ruza, Nara, Oka, the enemy stopped to gain a foothold, to bring up the available reinforcements, and intended to stay here until spring. In the rear, in case this defensive line was lost, other fortified lines and areas were hastily created along a system of strongholds and centers of resistance in more important areas and directions. Such important areas in the rear of the German troops, without which it was impossible to have secured communications and conduct a stubborn defense for a long period, were:

a) The area of Rzhev, Zubtsov, Sychevka at the junction of the Kalinin and Western fronts, for which there was a stubborn struggle throughout

January and thereafter. b) The Gzhatsk,

Vyazma region, which covers the junctions of the most important railway and dirt roads for supply (from the rear to the front), as well as rokadnye (along the front). The most important highway of the country, the highway Moscow-Gzhatsk-Vyazma-Smolensk-Minsk, also passes here.

c) The triangle of Medyn, Linen Factory, Yukhnov, closing the exit to the second highway, which was in the zone of operations of the Western Front, the strategic Moscow-Warsaw highway; at the same time, it covered the important direction of Kaluga, Vyazma, which included the railway and made it possible to bypass the Gzhatsk-Vyazma region from the south.

d) The Sukhinichi region - as a major railway junction of routes to Smolensk, Roslavl, Bryansk, Kaluga and at the same time as an area covering in the southern part of the communication along the front: the Sychevka-Vyazma-Bryansk railway rocade and the Gzhatsk-Yukhnov-Sukhinichi tract, Bryansk.

By the stubborn defense of these areas, the Germans created a certain efficiency and stability of the entire operational front, covering their main railway and automobile arteries of supply, evacuation and communications along the front. As a result, their rear acquired a solid foundation. Without holding the aforementioned areas and communication junctions in their hands, the Germans could not have secured communications - therefore, they could not count on a long and stubborn defense to sit here until spring and prevent us from reaching the Rzhev, Vyazma, Orel line.

That is why, during the offensive of the Red Army that developed during January, all the above-mentioned areas were the scene of the most fierce and stubborn battles. The main blows of the Red Army were directed here in order to split the enemy front into pieces, in order to then encircle and destroy the enemy in parts. The same areas were firmly held by the Germans, even taking the risk of being surrounded by units of the Red Army.

3. During January, the Soviet troops achieved major operational results. Successful offensive actions were carried out in most of the operational directions of the front. They were carried out in the following order.

In the first half of January, the offensive of our troops of the left wing developed rapidly south of the Kaluga-Yukhnov line. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps intercepted the Warsaw highway. The troops of the 10th Army reached the Vyazma, Bryansk roadway, advancing 120 km west of the Oka, but this was the end of their achievements in January. The center carried out a consistent offensive, at first more successful in the strip west of the Borovsk-Maloyaroslavets line, wedging here 30-50 km in depth between the Mozhaisk and Myatlyov-Yukhnovskaya German groups. The right wing of the front did not advance during the first ten days of January, and only starting on January 10 did the 20th Army manage (at first slowly and gradually) to break through the fortified defenses of the Germans and deploy a breakthrough in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction. In the second half

of January, the right wing of the front successfully developed an operational breakthrough in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction and advanced 50–60 km, coming close to the Gzhatsk defensive line. The center also advanced with the 5th Army in the direction of Mozhaisk and Gzhatsk. The 33rd Army, which turned out to be against the gap between the Gzhatsk and Yukhnov groupings, which was poorly occupied by the Germans, boldly developed an offensive towards Vyazma. The 1st Guards Cavalry Corps broke through there in the last days of January. The 43rd Army, interacting with the 49th and 50th armies of the left wing, covered the stubbornly resisting Yukhnov enemy grouping from the north, while the 49th and 50th armies covered it from the east and south. The 10th Army, having spread over a wide front, held the Vyazma-Bryansk road near Kirov, fighting the Zhizdrinskaya group of Germans, which launched a counterattack on Sukhinichi. On the left flank of the front, the 61st Army, having engulfed the Bolkhov grouping of Germans from three sides, waged a stubborn struggle against

it. As a result of all these actions, a number of partial defeats were inflicted on the enemy, our troops advanced to new frontiers and liberated a large Soviet territory from the Nazi invaders. The operational situation of the German troops deteriorated greatly. They suffered heavy losses in battles, were tired, the integrity of their operational front was violated. The harsh winter and the lack of warm uniforms also made it very difficult

position of the German troops. More than once they were on the verge of complete defeat and disaster.

But the enemy still offered stubborn resistance to our advancing troops, using every opportunity and favorable situation for counterattacks and counterattacks. Features of the operational situation at the end of January: a) The Kalinin Front, successfully advancing, went to the rear of the Germans west of the line Rzhev, Sychevka, throwing the cavalry west of Vyazma. Thus, the Western Front, in cooperation with Kalininsky, surrounded the largest Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Vyazma group of Germans. True, the forces in our outflanking groupings were still not enough to firmly close the encirclement and achieve decisive results from the penetration of our troops into the operational rear of the enemy.

b) The armies of the right wing of the Western Front came close to the Gzhatsk defensive line and began the struggle to capture it. c) The armies of the center inflicted a serious defeat on the enemy. In the Vyazma direction, the German front was split, our troops, airborne units and partisan detachments operated in the operational depth.

d) The armies of the left wing (in cooperation with the 43rd army of the center), as a result of a stubborn struggle, surround the Yukhnov group of Germans. With part of their forces, they advance deeply in the Roslavl direction, intercepting the Vyazma-Bryansk roadway, repel a counterattack on Sukhinichi, and fight the semi-encircled Bolkhov group on the left flank.

e) The unity and integrity of the enemy's operational front has been violated. It is split into four parts: • Vyazma

group - the strongest in composition, is under a strong threat of encirclement by our troops; it is covered from the east by the stubborn resistance of the Germans at the Gzhatsk line of defense;

• Yukhnovskaya group - is almost surrounded, but offers stubborn resistance and is a link between the Vyazma and Zhizdrinskaya groups; • Zhizdrinskaya group - intensified its

operations on the left wing of the front; it develops a counterattack in the direction of Sukhinichi to unblock the besieged German garrison and tends to

strengthening from the depths (perhaps in an attempt to split the left wing of the Western Front); •

Bolkhov group - fighting in a semi-encirclement, covering the Oryol direction, stubbornly defending the front to the east and to west.

4. The general nature of the operations in January was determined by the plan of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army to defeat the enemy in the Moscow strategic direction with the forces of two fronts - Kalinin and Western, as well as the specific situation that developed in the theater of military operations.

While the Western Front, advancing in the southwestern, western and northwestern directions, inflicted a number of defeats on the opposing German troops and split them into several isolated groups, the Kalinin Front went to the rear of the most powerful Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Vyazma group of Germans. A favorable environment was created for the defeat of the main forces of the central German army group. At this stage of the struggle, along with issues of strategic interaction between the fronts,

the correct operational interaction of the troops of the Kalinin and Western fronts in encircling and defeating the most important Rzhev-Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping of the enemy acquired particular importance. The completion of this operation and its final results are for the following months; they go beyond

our description.

Therefore, here we can only note for the time being this very important role of close interaction between the two fronts for the encirclement and defeat of the opposing enemy forces in January. In fact, there were not two independent front-line operations connected only by a single strategic plan, but one large offensive operation, in which the forces and means of the two fronts and the Supreme High Command, carried out directly by the Headquarters, participated. The fronts in this case were the executors of not only the strategic, but also the operational plans of the Supreme Commander.

Only by clarifying this feature of the operation carried out and covering from a unified operational-strategic point of view the events that unfolded in January on the Kalinin and Western fronts (and

also on the right wing of the Bryansk Front), one can correctly understand and evaluate the actions of the troops of the Western Front. This is important for the January period of operations precisely because in this concentric operation closer operational cooperation between the two fronts was required and carried out than in the case of rectilinearly developing operations. Close communication and interaction here concerned not only adjacent units and formations at the junction of the Kalinin and Western fronts, but captured the main forces of both fronts, which sought to encircle and defeat one common enemy grouping. 5.

Turning to the consideration of the combat events on the Western Front proper in January, it should be noted that the general style and nature of the front-line operation is different than in December.

First, in December, a counteroffensive was carried out on the Western Front, that is, an offensive that was a response to an enemy offensive and was connected with the operational defense that had been carried out directly before. It began with a struggle for the initiative. In January, the initiative for action was in our hands. We carried out the further development of the December offensive from the line of the rivers Lama, Ruza, Nara, Oka, and the Nazis were forced to defend themselves.

Secondly, in December we had a more sharply defined front-line operation, its clearer and simpler development. Its construction is easily understood: two leading wings moving forward, with a stable center, which is gradually activated. The form of this operation can be represented graphically quite easily. In January, however, the actual development of the Western Front's operations took a more complex and tortuous path. At first glance,

when considering the course of events, this single purposefulness is weakened, as well as the general connection and interdependence of phenomena on the scale of a front-line operation. It is revealed with sufficient completeness only with an in-depth consideration of these events. In the mosaic of individual private operations (army and army groups) and battles, the initial plans and plans of the front command are fragmented and differently refracted in different directions.

There are no sharply defined operations on the wings, which was a characteristic feature of the December period of the counteroffensive.

Armies (especially at the beginning) perform independent tasks in their direction, interacting with their neighbors. The stubborn resistance of the Yukhnov group required the involvement of several armies to fight it. The efforts of the 43rd, 49th, 50th armies, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, as well as airborne troops were directed here, here the front command carried out close interaction of several armies at the junction of the center and the left wing of the front. The development of the front

operation in January was uneven and took place in the following sequence: a) Rapid and deep advance

of the left wing of the front with access to the Vyazma-Bryansk roadway. The slow development of events in the direction of Kaluga, Yukhnov and a more rapid advance of the center to the west of Borovsk and Maloyaroslavets, bypassing the Medyn-Yukhnov group. A stable position on the right wing of the front due to the stubborn defense of the enemy. b) The deployment of an

operational breakthrough on the right wing of the front and the advancement of the troops of the right wing (and part of the center) in the direction of the Gzhatsk German defense line. The beginning of the coverage by adjacent flanks of the center and the left wing of the front of the Myatlev-Yukhnov group. The former position is on the rest of the

left wing. c) The encirclement of the Yukhnov group and the development of an offensive towards Vyazma in order to split the enemy front. Gradual slowdown of the offensive on both wings with a partial withdrawal under the onslaught of the enemy in the direction of Zhizdra, Sukhinichi.

Such a development of the front-line offensive operation was determined by the specific conditions of the struggle that developed in January in the Moscow strategic direction. Such a consistent deployment of a front-line offensive operation has its own regularity and internal logic, which we have tried to show in the entire preceding presentation.

The January offensive of the Soviet troops achieved, as we have already established, major positive results. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that such a "focal" nature of the development of an offensive, with a gradual reduction in the scope of ongoing operations and the results obtained from them, often serves as a sign that the offensive capabilities of troops are beginning to dry up,

their efforts are close to their limit, the offensive is running out. If there is no influx of fresh forces or a sharp change in the situation in a favorable direction, the offensive may fizzle out and stop.

As for army operations and larger battles, they (within the framework of the general conditions created by a single front-line operation, a more or less homogeneous enemy, the same natural conditions, etc.) were very diverse, and many of them are very instructive. Here you can find maneuver actions on a broad front (10th Army), an army breakthrough of a fortified zone with concentrated forces on a narrow sector (20th Army), and various other types of tactical and operational actions. They are described in detail in the previous chapters, where

he made private conclusions and conclusions.

The same should be said about the use of various branches of the troops in January. The corresponding descriptions, evaluations and conclusions were given above.

In the course of hostilities, the troops of the Red Army, as we have seen, repeatedly surrounded this or that grouping of German troops. These encirclements were carried out on different scales, ranging from small units or detachments (one or two reinforced regiments) to large operational groupings (Yukhnovskaya, Rzhev-Gzhatsko-Vyazma). However, they often did not end with the final defeat of the enemy troops on the battlefield or the capture of the encircled enemy.

In those cases when the enemy possessed sufficient forces and steadfastly held out, he managed to sit out in the encircled area for a considerable time, and then, choosing a favorable moment or receiving support from outside, break through and withdraw more or less of his forces from the encirclement. The January battles provide

valuable and instructive material for judging the methods of encirclement and completing it by defeating the encircled forces, as well as about the struggle in the encirclement. The combat and

operational experience gained shows that the encirclement of the enemy on an operational and tactical scale is still the most decisive form of combat and operation. Her

should be used whenever possible. The environment usually requires:

- defeat of enemy units on the flanks of the encircled group, accompanied by an offensive from the front;
- fast and decisive advance on the flanks with access to the rear mobile formations to the enemy, and sometimes the landing of airborne troops.

The encirclement can become solid only when it is completed by rifle troops. But the mere fact of encirclement does not yet mean the defeat of the enemy. If the enemy is stubborn and skillful, if he has enough strength and means to organize all-round defense, then the fight against the encircled enemy (depending on the scale and conditions of the environment) can take on a protracted character.

To achieve quick and decisive results, it is necessary that the advancing units not only be able to surround one or another enemy group, but also have enough forces and means to deliver crushing blows to the encircled group, splitting the enemy battle formation into separate isolated pieces and gradually compressing the encirclement ring. The January battles revealed that encircled

troops can offer serious and prolonged resistance if they are located compactly, in one area convenient for defense and occupy an area that is not penetrated by real fire. Under these conditions, it is possible to organize a stubborn defense, to maneuver with one's own forces, and to maintain interaction between units of the combat formation and between the branches of the armed forces.

In order to break the enemy's organized resistance, to break the unity and integrity of the defense, it is necessary, by concentrated strikes in narrow sectors, to break up his battle formation into separate pieces of such dimensions that would be shot through by a real crossfire. Under such conditions, it is already difficult for the encircled to hold out for a long time, and each of these cut off, isolated parts can be destroyed separately. The encirclement of the enemy, completed in this way, can give a decisive result: complete defeat, destruction on the battlefield, or capture of the encircled enemy forces.

6. When describing the January period of the fighting, serious attention was paid to the study of the issues of organizing the rear and material

technical support for the advancing troops of the Red Army. It was necessary to establish how this work was organized, what difficulties arose for the rear services at different stages of the operation, and how these difficulties were overcome. The materials given in the rear section show the complexity and originality of the work done on the Western Front in the conditions of a harsh and snowy winter. Of the issues related to the offensive of one or another army (or group of armies), the logistical support of the offensive of the 20th army in the Volokolamsk-Gzhatsk direction (army breakthrough), as well as the organization of supplies to the advancing troops of the left wing during their rapid advance, deserves special attention. forward and a significant separation from the bases. 7. Of significant

interest are the quantities of ammunition used in December and January during our offensive. The corresponding tables reflect this small consumption of ammunition. But at the same time, it is necessary to take into account the general nature of the hostilities, the conditions and possibilities of transportation in which our troops were located. It should also be borne in mind that, in addition to the ammunition that was released by the supplying authorities and recorded in the tables, our troops used a significant amount of captured ammunition. Their actual consumption in this way was more than indicated in the supply documents.

8. The experience gained allows us to draw some general conclusions about operations in winter

conditions. Winter conditions permit the conduct of large-scale operations (front-line and joint operations of several fronts), but they especially require that the available forces and means be proportionate to the goals that

are set before the operations. The most suitable form for an offensive on a frontal scale is operations by several strike groupings in different directions, followed by the encirclement and destruction of certain enemy operational groupings. In winter, troops (with

the exception of ski units) have less room for maneuver than in summer; in this regard, the planning of winter operations requires special determination.

Major winter operations are mainly planned on a frontal scale. Armies solve limited operational tasks. Usually an army advances in one direction, with one strike force. The solution of major operational tasks requires, as a rule, the efforts of several armies.

Operational combinations associated with the environment of significant enemy groupings are carried out on a frontal scale.

The organization of combined-arms combat in the army's main offensive line is carried out by the army command, which, by organizing the efforts of divisions and attached army equipment, directly ensures the performance of combat missions by military formations operating in the main direction. With a large number of formations included in the army, divisions operating in the auxiliary direction can be combined into an operational group. The success of winter operations largely depends on the thoroughness of their

preparation, in particular, on the forthcoming rear work clearly thought out in all details. 9. This description of actions in the Moscow strategic direction basically ends on January

31, 1942. True, the events unfolding here have not yet reached their logical conclusion by this date. The operations did not end, there was no operational pause, and the fighting continued to develop in the subsequent period. However, they are already the subject of separate consideration.

Part VI

General conclusion on the Moscow operation

The general course of the Moscow

operation This description describes events of great political and military significance that unfolded in the Moscow strategic direction and covered the period from half October 1941 to the end of January 1942, i.e. three and a half months of the Great Patriotic War. It briefly highlights the failure of the first (October) German offensive

against Moscow, which led them to protracted battles in the Kalinin, Moscow proper and Tula directions without any decisive results. The weakening of the tension of hostilities since the beginning of November in the Moscow direction

(with the aim of regrouping, pulling up forces and preparing the Germans for a new offensive) was an operational pause necessary for them and, at the same time, when considering the general course of events, it represents the logical line that separates the completion of the first offensive from the beginning of the second. In mid-November, the second general German offensive against Moscow began. These and subsequent

events, in accordance with their general course, can be divided into such completed periods (stages):

1. The second general offensive of the Nazi troops on Moscow and the defensive battle on the Western Front (November 16 - December 5, 1941). As a result of this period, the fascist German troops advanced on both flanks, penetrating deeply into our position, and hovering over Moscow from the north and south. But in the course of the struggle, the balance of forces and the mutual position of the parties changed.

The Germans were exhausted in stubborn battles with the troops of the Red Army; by the end of this period, they no longer had the strength for a further offensive and had to go on the defensive at a disadvantage, preparing to retreat under the growing blows of the Red Army. The troops of the Red Army exhausted and exhausted the advancing

enemy, leading a stubborn and active defense on the distant and near approaches to Moscow. By the end of the period, the troops of the Western Front, reinforced by the reserves of the Supreme High Command, stopped the enemy, forced him to go on the defensive in unfavorable conditions for him and prepared for a decisive counteroffensive on both flanks, now having superiority in forces over the Germans and occupying a more advantageous operational position. **2. The counteroffensive of the Red Army on the Western Front and the defeat of the Nazi troops near Moscow (December 6-24).** As a result of

the December counter-offensive of our troops, the enemy suffered a severe defeat. Both of his flank strike groups were defeated and hastily retreated to the west. The center has so far held back the attacks of the Red Army troops. Later, on the northern wing, the Germans managed to temporarily stop our offensive at the fortified line of the Lama and Ruza rivers. In the south, our troops quickly crossed the Oka between Kaluga and Belev and, rapidly developing their attack, pursued the enemy. **3. Further advance of the troops of the Western Front from the line of the rivers Lama, Ruza, Nara, Oka (December 25, 1941 - January 31, 1942).**

This period (almost equal in duration to the previous two) gave the Red Army a large gain in space; the enemy suffered a number of partial defeats; the integrity of his front was violated, favorable conditions were created for the troops

of two fronts (Kalinin and Western) to encircle the main German forces located in the Moscow strategic direction. But the events unfolding in January (described in the third book of the work) had not yet reached their logical conclusion by this time and continued to develop in February. For convenience of consideration, this long stage can be subdivided into three shorter partial periods of hostilities in accordance with how the center of gravity of events shifted on the scale of a front-line operation.

- December 25 - January 10 - the main advance of the troops and the main events took place on the left wing of the front with access to the Vyazma, Bryansk roadway.
- January 10-20 - breakthrough of the

German defense on the right wing and development of the offensive in the Gzhatsk direction.

- January 20-31 - the main events unfolded in the center: the encirclement of the Yekhnov group; split of the front in the direction of Vyazma.

All these actions were interconnected both by the fact that they took place within the same front, and by the sequence of development within their wing or center. Sometimes the events within the wing did not end completely in a given period of time, but continued in the future. But the center of gravity of the battles on the scale of the front and the main events moved in the following sequence: until January 10 - on the left wing; the second decade of January - on the right wing; later - in the center and in the directions adjacent to it. In accordance with the division of the Moscow

operation into the main stages, in the present description, these stages were considered, and conclusions and conclusions were given for each of them.

The work of the

command The Moscow operation showed exceptionally high requirements for the work of command and control of troops.

The fascist German command, in developing a plan for the capture of Moscow and the defeat of the Red Army, set decisive goals, which, according to their plan, should have led to a speedy end to the war. It was the plan of an experienced and skillful predator, striving for quick captures and dreaming of profiting from someone else's good. But the German command underestimated the strength of the resistance of the Red Army and severely miscalculated.

Having suffered a defeat near Moscow, the German command abandons active operations and tries to linger on a number of defensive lines. In this struggle, the Germans showed great tenacity in defense. However, the extensive offensive operations of the Red Army that developed during the winter put the enemy troops in a difficult position. The entire central group of the German armies of General Bock was more than once on the verge of complete disaster.

During the period from December 6 to January 15, that is, in a month and 10 days of offensive operations by the Red Army, the German army lost about 300,000 soldiers and officers alone on the Soviet-German front.

During this period, Soviet troops captured 4,801 guns, 3,071 mortars, up to 8,000 machine guns, over 90,000 rifles, 2,766 tanks, 33,640 vehicles. More than 1100 enemy planes were destroyed.

These data clearly show what a heavy defeat the fascist German army suffered near Moscow and in other sectors of the Soviet-German front. The Supreme High Command of the Red

Army showed great operational-strategic foresight and foresight in organizing a rebuff to the Germans near Moscow. The necessary number of troops was allocated to the Western Front to conduct active defense, based on a whole system of fortified lines. In the immediate rear, the Moscow Defense Zone was organized, which, with its troops and fortifications, was, as it were, a covering army for Moscow and at the same time a source of additional reserves of all kinds for the front. In the depths of the country, new reserve armies were created, which were promptly concentrated by order of the Headquarters on both sides of Moscow, behind the flanks of the Western Front.

In the course of the struggle on the outskirts of Moscow, the Supreme High Command of the Red Army showed great firmness, courage and skill. Despite the extremely difficult and acute situation at the front, the main reserves were retained until the decisive moment for active purposes and were placed in those places where the fate of the battle was being decided, where they were most needed. At the moment of the crisis of the fierce battle near Moscow, the reserves of the Supreme High Command were put into action and ensured the Red Iron Supreme Commander of the Red Army's success and broke down all obstacles to victory. At the time, the command of the Red Army, when necessary, showed great flexibility,

soberly assessing the situation that had arisen, and made decisions that were most advantageous in the given situation. We saw how the scope of our counteroffensive gradually increased, taking into account the development of events: from the defeat of the German flank groupings by the wings of the Western Front to the encirclement of the rest of the forces of the central German army group by the forces of our two fronts and Headquarters. Having seized the initiative in early December

actions into their own hands, the command of the Red Army firmly held it in their hands throughout the winter offensive.

The idea and plans of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief Comrade Stalin found talented organizers and skillful performers in the person of the command and troops of the Western and Kalinin fronts. They have a great merit in the defense of Moscow and in the defeat of the Nazi hordes on its outskirts.

Of particular note is the leadership of the commander of the Western Front, Army General Comrade Zhukov. In very difficult conditions of defense and withdrawal, followed by a transition to a counteroffensive, he gave examples of bold and bright decisions, firmness, resourcefulness in choosing means and methods of action, as well as the ability to organize a rebuff to the enemy in the most difficult situation and prepare his subsequent defeat. The work of

the command of the Western Front is an example worthy of deep study. We have noted this many times in

his presentation.

The role of army commanders in the dynamics of rapidly developing events was also extremely responsible. The course and outcome of hostilities largely depended on their bold and well-founded decisions, on their energy and organizational abilities. The work of army commanders in command and control of troops captured operational and tactical aspects. It was reviewed and evaluated by us throughout the work.

We saw how, in the difficult days of defense and withdrawal under the onslaught of superior enemy forces, the commander of the 16th Army, General Rokossovsky, and the commander of the 5th Army, General Govorov, together with other army commanders, stubbornly and skillfully defended each line, blocking the enemy's path to Moscow. Under their cover, deep reserves were concentrated and they occupied the places indicated by them in advance in the general operational formation. In repelling enemy attacks near Tula, remarkable pages in the history of the war were written by the 50th Army under the command of General Boldin.

We also noted the great importance that the actions of the 30th and 1st shock armies under the command of Generals Lelyushenko and Kuznetsov had during our transition to the counteroffensive, as well as

20th Army, and in the south - the 10th Army of General Golikov and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov. They, as well as the commanders of the central armies, who successfully completed the tasks assigned to them, have great merits in the defense of Moscow and in the defeat of the Nazi invaders.

On the nature of

operations A study of the actions of both sides in the Moscow strategic direction over a period of three and a half months clearly shows the large scale that can be achieved by modern operations of large military masses pursuing very important and decisive goals in conditions of maneuver warfare - on vast fronts and with relatively small operational

densities.

Army and front-line operations in the Moscow strategic direction in the period under review had their own characteristics and features, which we will discuss below. But along with army and front operations, at certain moments we also saw the operations of army groups (within the framework of a front operation), and the totality of the struggle in the Moscow strategic direction, undoubtedly, went beyond the limits of a front operation, outgrew them. The Moscow direction was exclusively responsible; important goals were pursued here. Therefore, the struggle took

on such a sharp character and dimensions that could not fit into the framework of even such a vast front, with such a strong composition of troops, as was the Western Front.

The actions in the Moscow direction as a whole were a large operation of a strategic scale (strategic operation), in the course of which the forces and means of two or three fronts and the High Command, led by the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Comrade Stalin, were involved in the course of the struggle. At certain periods, the reserves and means of the Supreme High Command played a decisive role in this great operation.

The expansion of the scope of modern operations also contributes to the level of development achieved technology. Aviation,

motorized connections, modern technical means of communication have expanded the scope of operations and increased the permissible limits of their control. They accelerated the pace of development of operations, made it possible to quickly overcome large areas, achieve decisive operational and strategic results in a limited time frame (if conditions are favorable).

At the same time, a characteristic feature of modern operations was the continuity of hostilities over a long period. One operation directly passed into another, the lines between them were erased; the presence of operational pauses between private operations is a relatively rare occurrence. On the main axes, we often observed an uninterrupted series of successive operations and battles.

In the Moscow operation, the Headquarters had to not only coordinate the efforts of the fronts on a strategic scale, aimed at achieving a common goal, but at certain periods directly conduct this large operation, achieving (when necessary) close operational interaction of the fronts to solve a common task. This close operational interaction (in accordance with the specific development of events) was required not only for adjacent military formations at the junctions of fronts, but sometimes also covered the main forces of the two fronts (as, for example, in the second half of January). The actions of the Western Front provide

valuable material for conclusions on **the front** operation as well. They have been partially cited by us in the previous presentation. But it must be borne in mind that the Western Front (in accordance with the significance of the Moscow strategic direction) was not **a typical** front of the Patriotic War. It stood out from the fronts adjacent to it in its size and the greater composition of the troops. In his immediate rear, he had the capital of the Soviet Union - Moscow. This left an imprint on the scale and nature of the operations of the Western Front. As for the fronts neighboring it (Kalinin, Bryansk), it should be noted, firstly, their less organizational stability as organizational-strategic associations of several armies, they were created or ceased to exist in accordance with the development of the situation; secondly, some disaggregation of fronts and front-line operations, narrowing down the goals and objects of these operations.

Characteristic features **of a front-line operation** according to the

experience of the Western Front: 1) A front-line operation pursues a major strategic goal; achieving it has a direct impact on the course of the campaign and the war. A modern front-line operation in its development solves strategic and

operational tasks. 2) A front-line operation is deployed in an important strategic direction, uniting a whole bunch of mutually connected operational areas in which armies or army groups operate. 3) A front-line

operation combines the actions of several armies, operational mobile groups, front-line aviation, and airborne assault forces, setting particular goals for them and setting tasks leading to the achievement of the overall goal of the operation.

4) Great variability in the operational forms and content of the operation, depending on its concept and the specific conditions of the situation. The uneven development of the operation on different directions, the development of one form into another and the possibility of the actual deployment of the operation, different from that which was assumed according to the original plan.

Operational forms may change at each stage of the operation, and sometimes even within the same stage. This was mentioned during the analysis of the December counteroffensive.

The operational formation of the front included two wings and a center (consisting of field armies), mobile groups, front-line aviation and front-line reserves. The length of the winding front line was very variable (from 250 to 700 km). All the armies of the front were located, as a rule, in one echelon. Front reserves (divisions) were located at a distance of 15-30 km from the battle line. The operational formation of the front in most cases was characterized by a linear location and an insufficient number of reserves. However, it must be taken into account that the tension of the struggle required the command of the front to continuously supply its armies fighting heavy battles, and the necessary depth of operational separation of troops and the presence of large reserves were acquired at the expense of the Moscow defense zone and the reserves of the Stavka,

located in the zone of the Western Front and possessing large forces.

Army operations were usually an integral part of one of the stages of a front-line operation. Their goals and objectives were determined in accordance with the plan of the front-line operation. The size and composition of the army depended on the place and role of the given army in the operation of the front (main or auxiliary direction), on the nature of the task being performed; sometimes its composition changed significantly already in the course of the battles, when the army received

a more important task. The form of an army operation was determined by the goals set for it; it depended on the forces and position of the enemy, the forces and means of the army itself, and the nature of the terrain. For the most part, the blow was delivered from one common area and in one direction. The operational encirclement required the involvement of several armies.

The operational formation of the army usually had the following form: • in the offensive - divisions in one echelon (sometimes in two); army reserves 12-15 km;

• in defense - divisions mostly in one echelon; divisions of the second echelon (when available) were located 8–15 km from the battle line; army reserves (regiment, division) - at a distance of 12-15 km.

The general character of army operations also depends (along with other data) on the organizational composition of the army. The army of this organization (the actual composition of the various armies on the Western Front was repeatedly cited in the relevant chapters) was an operational-tactical association of troops. The army operation on the Western Front has been disaggregated: its goals have narrowed; tasks and objects have become smaller. The role of each of the army operations in the overall operation of the front and its independence have decreased.

Along with this, the role of tactical elements in the actions of the army has sharply increased. The battle did not always close within the division. With the abolition of the corps organization, the army commander was the organizer of the combined arms battle in the main direction. This extremely important function cannot be removed from it in any way. Insufficient understanding of this issue by some armies led at first to a crisis in combined-arms combat in the main direction. In a number of cases, an operationally completed task (for example, the encirclement of an enemy grouping) could not be

immediately completed and carried out tactically: defeat, destruction on the battlefield or capture of the encircled enemy grouping (Klin, Sukhinichi, Yukhnovskaya grouping, etc.). Thus, the operational element in the army was

reduced, while the tactical one increased. The experience of the Western Front shows that, despite the extensive fronts and relatively low operational density, a modern army relatively rarely solves an independent task in a separate operational direction. This happens more often on the defensive than on the offensive. Usually, two or three armies jointly solve one common operational task. The army on the defensive, according to the experience of the Western Front, is able to fight the advancing enemy within the tactical zone, using its first-line divisions and the army reserve.

If the forces of the attacker did not greatly outnumber the forces of the defender, then the army in a number of cases was able to stop him at one line or another (defense on the Nara River, in the Aleksin region, etc.). But if the enemy attacked with a strike operational group (especially if he managed to break through with mobile formations into the operational depth), then the army's own forces were usually not enough to destroy this grouping. Energetic assistance was required from the front command: aviation, tank and cavalry formations, rifle divisions, equipment, ammunition (defense of the 16th, 30th, 50th armies in November and early December). The decisive role in counterattacks in operational depth belongs to front-line reserves.

The peculiarities of the operations that the armies had to carry out also consisted in the fact that these were private operations of a sequential type, which did not have a strict time limit and grew one from the other. Some army operations were carried out in one grouping to the full depth. Often they lacked the second echelon of the army.

The peculiarity of the actions of the 16th and 10th armies was expressed, among other things, in the fact that the width of their zone of operations changed dramatically. Thus, in mid-November, the 16th Army occupied a front about 70 km long, with part of its forces in the second echelon. When retreating under pressure

Germans on the near approaches to Moscow, its front gradually narrowed to 30 km, and during the transition to the counteroffensive it was even smaller. This allowed the 16th Army to achieve a good operational density of troops by the end of the defensive period and ensured its subsequent transition to the counteroffensive.

In the 10th Army, the offensive front fluctuated considerably. This army entered the Tula operation in December, operating in a strip 100 km wide. By the end of the operation, the front of the 10th Army had a length of no more than 30–35 km. In a strip of the same width, the army also operated in the first stage of the Belevsko-Kozelsk operation. In this case, as the actual course of events showed, the armies could have a strong second echelon consisting of three or four rifle divisions, which, as the hostilities developed, were withdrawn to the first echelon of the army in those areas where it was necessary to strengthen or develop the offensive. After the 10th Army left to the west of the Oka River, the width of its front increased sharply and reached 150 km along the outer contour. In this case, the second echelon of the army was virtually absent (except for one small division).

In armies that had to carry out operations on a wide front and have a large number of directly subordinate formations in their composition (for example, in the 10th and 50th armies there were eight rifle divisions, not counting other units and formations), the issue of with command and control - especially when communication was often broken. In such cases, apparently, it would be expedient to combine the divisions operating in the auxiliary direction into a task force in order to relieve the army authority for work in the main direction. In the course of the successful development of hostilities, during the period of pursuit of the retreating enemy and in the organization of a breakthrough on a narrow front, we observed army operations in a more extensive form. But as soon as the strength and activity of the enemy increased, his resistance intensified, it turned out to be difficult for one army to solve independent operational tasks. Then quite sharply defined **operations of army groups** appeared within the framework of the developing front-line operation (for example, the right and left wings of the front in December; the actions of the central armies to encircle the Kondrovo-Yukhnov group of Germans in January, etc.).

These operations of the army groups were also directly led by the front. But the need for the interaction of several neighboring armies arose often; the interaction itself was to be of a closer operational-tactical nature. The situation often required the unification of several armies and the management of their actions, entering into specific details. Meanwhile, the front had a cumbersome composition (10-11 armies); the front-line instance was heavily burdened and loaded. With a long battle line, front control could not be direct everywhere and had to be carried out from the depths. The operations of the army groups (even those carried out most successfully)

did not give a complete result for a number of reasons, including, perhaps, due to insufficiently coordinated in detail the work of the armies, solving one common operational task.

On the conduct of hostilities

Long and stubborn battles in the Moscow region, carried out in a cold and snowy winter, were a very severe school for our troops. It took a huge strain of moral and physical strength to first withstand the crushing blows of armored German wedges and defend Moscow, and then break the stubborn resistance of the enemy, defeat him and drive him to the west. In this titanic struggle, our troops hardened, gained valuable experience and learned how to defeat the Germans.

Limited by the scope of an operational study, we could only show the epic pictures of the struggle of the Soviet people with separate strokes, only very briefly characterize the heroism, courage and selflessness of individuals and entire units shown in the battles near Moscow in these great days. Entire volumes will be written about them, and, undoubtedly, the near and far approaches to Moscow will be sacred places that will be visited with reverence by millions of Soviet people who honor the memory of the heroes of the great battle for Moscow. Their glorious deeds will forever live in the memory of the people. But our

task is different now. We must show here what the experience of fighting in the Moscow region gave valuable in the field of tactics, which enriched

our theory and practice of conducting combat as a result of the victorious actions of the Red Army in the Moscow operation.

The experience of combat operations of the troops of the Western Front (as well as other fronts) found its expression in the directives of the Headquarters issued in the winter of 1941/42. These were directives on the basics of combat and the use of combat arms. The organization of the artillery offensive, the basic principles of the use of tank units and formations, the use of the air force and engineering troops, which have now been introduced into the depths of the Red Army, reflect to a large extent the combat experience of the victorious Moscow operation.

From this point of view, the guiding directives and orders of the Western Front, summarizing by the spring of 1942 the experience of conducting offensive and defensive battles against the Germans, also deserve great

attention. With regard to the conduct of **an offensive** battle by the Red Army, it was pointed out that the Germans, acting on a vast front, were not in a position to create a solid and dense defense everywhere. The defense of the Germans, as a rule, is built in pockets, in the form of strong points, united in nodes of resistance (company, battalion). They are usually based on settlements, groves and other convenient local objects, carefully adapted for defense. Much attention is paid to the organization of the fire system, in particular, to the use of infantry fire weapons. Such a construction of the

defense, in the presence of a number of positive aspects, nevertheless allows a breakthrough of the front, makes it possible to infiltrate between strong points and strike at the flank and rear of the defender. The capture of a strong point violates the general defense system and opens up access for our troops to the depth of the defensive zone.

For counterattacks, the Germans usually collect reserves from the depths and from neighboring sectors. Most often, counterattacks are carried out by separate battalions with tanks, seeking to strike from the flanks of the advancing troops. Heavy mortar artillery fire is used. The Germans do not spare shells, but the fire is usually low-aimed, on the squares. The success of our offensive

operations is achieved on the condition of careful reconnaissance of the enemy, good preparation of troops for battle,

a clear organization of the interaction of troops, skillful and firm command and control, and good material and technical support of the battle. Artillery, mortars, and the fire of the Guards mortar battalions are of great importance in the preparation and conduct of an offensive; however, it is impossible to break through the defense without organized fire from the advancing infantry. It should be borne in mind that the enemy, as soon as our success is outlined, abandons aircraft to influence the advancing troops, therefore a good organization of air defense is necessary. Tanks are usually used in the main direction. A tank attack should be sudden and massive. Aviation and artillery prepare and accompany a tank attack to its entire depth.

The first combat echelons of rifle regiments, not stopping at the forefront of defense, continue to move forward. Capturing strongholds that still hold out is the task of the second echelons. With a successful offensive, the enemy seeks to quickly organize counterattacks. Therefore, consolidating the successes achieved and bringing the captured objects into a defensive state are of decisive importance. Having upset the combat formations of the counterattacking enemy with fire, our infantry and tanks (with the active support of artillery, mortars and machine guns) themselves go into a rapid attack.

When conducting **a defensive battle** with our troops, it must be taken into account that the Germans, preparing for an offensive, systematically and in detail study our defense. In the offensive organized by the Germans, aviation, tanks, artillery and mortars are used on a massive scale in the area of the main attack. At the same time, breaking through our positions and infiltrating in groups of submachine gunners into the depths of our defense, the Germans are trying to create the appearance of a quick encirclement of the defense, seize rear routes, sow panic in the rear, and disrupt command and control. The practice of combat shows good interaction between enemy aviation and its advancing ground forces.

Proceeding from this, the defense should be built in such a way as to: 1) make it difficult for the enemy to reconnoiter our defense; to this end, observe complete disguise, vigilance, military secrecy; to deceive the enemy with a false location of the forward edge;

2) when building a defense, it is good to study and correctly use the terrain; the approaches to the position from the enemy side must be carefully observed and shot through; 3) defense should be anti-

artillery, anti-tank, anti-air, anti-personnel; in accordance with these requirements, it is necessary to carry out measures for the most complete and expedient use of camouflage, fire weapons, and local lines. Each strong point and battalion area must be equipped as anti-tank areas. Fundamentals of defensive combat: 1) On the distant approaches, it is necessary to hit the advancing enemy units with aircraft and long-range artillery.

As soon as the combat outposts reach the line, specially allocated fire weapons enter from temporary positions. When the enemy enters the starting position for the offensive, our artillery, aviation, mortars deliver powerful blows to the accumulation of infantry and tanks. 2) With the beginning of the enemy offensive, artillery, mortars and part of heavy machine guns fire at the combat formations of the advancing infantry. With the approach of the enemy to the line of

attack, all fire weapons open powerful fire. When the enemy tanks went on the attack, the artillery carries fire on the tanks. The task of anti-tank defense is to repulse

the attack of tanks and prevent them from breaking through the front line of defense. The task of all fire weapons in strong points and artillery (not engaged in fighting tanks) is to cut off the infantry from the tanks, press it to the ground, inflict defeat, and prevent it from attacking the forward edge of the defensive

zone. All fire weapons of non-attacked neighboring sectors are also involved in repelling the attack.

3) When the enemy is wedged into the depth of defense, the commanders of regiments and divisions are obliged, while continuing the defense of strong points, to stop the advance of the enemy with massive fire and organize a counterattack by forces of the second echelons supported by tanks.

Groups of submachine gunners that have infiltrated the front line are destroyed by flank fire from neighboring strongholds, as well as

strongholds located in depth, and private counterattacks of the nearest companies and battalions.

When attacking and defending in harsh winter conditions, the endurance of troops, their readiness for operations at night, in severe frosts, in a snowstorm, on skis, etc., is of great importance. Troops must be carefully prepared in advance for these types of combat operations.

Experience in Logistics Organization and Logistics In

the course of the battles for Moscow, the logistic and supply agencies did a

great job. During the defensive period - in the situation of mass evacuation of the population, industrial equipment and supplies, in the conditions of a sharp change in cargo flows and the systematic impact of enemy aircraft on our rear and supply routes - the rear apparatus as a whole coped with its task, ensured an uninterrupted supply of troops and prepared the material base for decisive counteroffensive. With the beginning of the

counter-offensive, the workers of the rear and supply faced new diverse tasks: to organize the restoration of supply routes, to ensure the supply of a significantly increased amount of cargo along the lengthened dirt roads; change techniques and methods of work in accordance with the new situation. The rear did not fully solve these problems. At the end of January, the material security of the troops decreased significantly, and there were more and more interruptions in the supply of units.

Experience in organizing the rear and material support of troops in the Moscow operation is of exceptional importance. The battle for Moscow unfolded on a broad front. At the same time, the main forces were grouped in decisive directions, so the density of the operational deployment of troops was uneven. The great maneuverability of modern armies made it possible to change the grouping of troops and shift the center of efforts from one direction to another. The rear had to take into account these conditions and adapt to them. Timely and complete material support of the

troops in such conditions (as the experience of the rear in the Moscow operation shows) requires:

1. Establishing a firm limit on the expenditure of material resources by stages of the operation and directions, determined not "by eye" and not according to pre-war standards, but based on the real needs of the troops in this operation. 2. Creation of

ways of supply and evacuation with well-established services: regulation and repair and restoration; the presence in the hands of the command of the necessary transport and a reserve of basic materiel.

3. Close and uninterrupted communication between the leading workers of the rear and the headquarters, with the goal of full and timely awareness of the rear about the operational situation and the intentions of the command.

Of no less importance, as experience has shown, is the reliable and fast communication of the rear both with the troops and between the various rear services, which ensures control over the state of material security, the expenditure of funds, and the organization of maneuver of material resources. Violation of the rules established by

experience and poor communications led to a disruption in the supply of parts, wasteful spending, and even the loss of valuable and much needed stocks. In mobile defense, when the enemy is superior

in motorized units, the organization of the rear (disposition of people, grouping of supplies, methods and methods of work) should ensure continuity of supply even in cases of disruption of communication between troops and their rears and, at the same time, exclude massive losses of materiel. This requirement is met by the creation of a small mobile reserve and the leaving of small reserves on the ground at road junctions, as well as the organization of operational groups in the rear and their location in communication centers. Administrative methods prevailed in rear management during the defensive period. However, in the absence of

a plan, they turned into emergency ones, sometimes leading to disruption of supplies and massive loss of reserves. The planning of transportation by railroads, highways and dirt roads is the core of planning the work of the rear as a whole. Difficulties in the work of the rear, interruptions in supply at the end of December and in January were caused to a large extent by the incomplete use of available vehicles, as well as

their insufficient increase during the rapid advance of our troops - in particular, on the left wing. Clear-cut and at

the same time flexible planning of the work of the rear and material support during the breakthrough of the enemy's fortified zone in advance and during the offensive is very important. Without a carefully and comprehensively thought-out alignment of forces, disposition of funds, and distribution of the entire volume of work in time and space, inconsistencies in the work of numerous links in the rear, inappropriate use of material resources, disruptions in the supply of troops are inevitable. The organization

of the rear and material support of ten army formations turned out to be cumbersome and complex. In order to unload the front apparatus, the material support of the shock (reserve) armies, operationally subordinate to the front, was for some time entrusted to the central departments. At the first stage, while the enemy was enveloping the armies of the Western Front in a semicircle, the department of the chief of rear and content departments coped with their tasks. As a result of the defeat of the enemy invading wings and the beginning of the forward movement, the front greatly increased, the tasks of supply became more complicated, and communications with the armies of the left flank were often disrupted.

In order to improve the material support of the armies of the left wing in the Tula region, a head department of the front base was created, and an operational rear command group was organized. These measures somewhat improved the supply of the left-flank armies; however, the difficulties associated with an excessive number of connections served and an increased front line were not completely eliminated. More expedient, apparently, would be the creation of a special apparatus to provide for the left-flank army group. In general, in the

Moscow operation, the command and apparatus of the rear received a rich and extremely valuable practice in organizing the rear and material support for the troops in various types of combat and operational operations. The experience of the rear in the Moscow operation is very instructive.

The transition from defense and retreat to a decisive counteroffensive on a broad operational-strategic scale with the defeat of the advancing enemy forces is one of the most difficult and complex operations that place extremely high demands on the moral strength and valor of the troops, on the quality of their command and control. Such operations go back to the heights of military art. Military history knows few operations like the Moscow one.

The Moscow operation is an extremely diverse and dynamic phenomenon. Almost all types of operational and tactical actions have found their application here. Maneuvering battles and battles during the offensive and defense, breakthrough of the front and encirclement, the actions of mobile units and airborne assault forces, the rapid change of operational and tactical forms fill the considered period. The Moscow operation greatly enriches our understanding of modern combat and operations. She warns us against patterns and

schemes.

We need to deeply and seriously study the Moscow operation. The paths for the further development of the military art of the Red Army lie through the speediest and most complete mastery of the experience of the Great Patriotic War. One of the brightest and most exciting pages in its history belongs to the Moscow operation.

Annex 1

The combat schedule of the enemy in front of the Western Front on January 5, 1942

[illegible]

Операционные направления	Пехотные дивизии		Моторизованные дивизии		Танковые дивизии		Всего дивизий и занимаемый фронт
	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	
4. На юхновском направлении против: 49-й армии	268, 260	230	—	—	—	—	5 дивизий — 30 км
50-й армии	137, 17	—	36	—	19	—	5 дивизий, около 150 км
Итого	131, 31, 52	—	—	—	—	—	10 дивизий, около 180 км
5. На сухиничском направлении, против 10-й армии	296, 216	—	10	—	—	—	3 дивизии, около 100 км
ВСЕГО	25	6	4	—	6	2	43 дивизии, занимаемый фронт около 470 км

The combat schedule of the enemy in front of the Western Front on January 15, 1942

Операционные направления	Пехотные дивизии		Моторизованные дивизии		Танковые дивизии		Всего дивизий и занимаемый фронт
	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	
1. На волоколамско-жатском направлении, против: 1-й армии	23	—	14	—	7,2	—	4 дивизии — 30 км

Операционные направления	Пехотные дивизии		Моторизованные дивизии		Танковые дивизии		Всего дивизий и занимаемый фронт
	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	
20-й армии	35	106	—	—	5,11	6	5 дивизий — 20 км
16-й армии	Пехотная дивизия СС, 252	85	—	—	—	10	4 дивизии — 25 км 13 дивизий — 75 км
Итого							
2. На Можайском направлении, против 5-й армии	78, 87, 197, 7	63, 107	3	—	—	—	7 дивизий — 45 км
33-й армии	258, 183, 267, 15, 98	292	—	—	20	—	7 дивизий, около 100 км
Итого							14 дивизий, около 145 км
3. На Юхновском направлении, против 43-й армии	34, 263, 17, 260, 268	213					6 дивизий — 30 км
4. На Спас-Деменском направлении, против 49-й армии	52, 131, 31	—	—	—	—	—	3 дивизии — 15 км
50-й армии	64, 137, сводные части	230	—	—	—	—	2-3 дивизии и сводные части, около 130 км
Итого							5-6 дивизий — 145 км и сводные части

Операционные направления	Пехотные дивизии		Моторизованные дивизии		Танковые дивизии		Всего дивизий и занимаемый фронт
	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	
5. На рославльском направлении, против 10-й армии	296, 56, 211, 216	—	29	—	19	4	6-7 дивизий — 100 км
6. На брянском направлении, против 61-й армии	208, 167, 112	—	—	10	—	—	4 дивизии — 90 км и отдельные части
ВСЕГО	29-30 дивизий и сводные части	7	2-3	1	6	3	48-50 дивизий и сводные части, занимаемый фронт около 550-585 км

The combat schedule of the enemy in front of the Western Front on January 25, 1942

Операционные направления	Пехотные дивизии		Моторизованные дивизии		Танковые дивизии		Всего дивизий и занимаемый фронт
	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	первой линии	резервные	
1. На новодугинском направлении, против 20-й армии	106, 23	35	14	—	7, 6, 11	2, 5	9 дивизий — 35 км
2. На гжатском направлении, против 5-й армии	252, 87, 255, 197, 7	78, 63, 107, 85	—	3	—	10	11 дивизий — 50 км
3. На юхновско-вяземском направлении, против: 33-й армии	267, 183, 292, 258	15	—	—	—	—	5 дивизий — 50 км
43-й армии	52, 98, 34, 263 и сводные части	—	—	—	—	—	4 дивизии, около 75 км, специальные части
48-й армии	17, 260	—	—	—	—	—	2 дивизии — 15 км
50-й армии	268, 31, 131, 137	230	—	—	—	20	6 дивизий — 60 км
Итого							17 дивизий, около 200 км
4. На спасско-деменском и сухиничском направлениях, против 10-й армии	213, 164, 216, 208 и сводные части	—	—	10	19	—	6 дивизий — 215 км и сводные части
5. На брянском направлении, против 61-й армии	296, 112, 56	167, 211	25	—	—	4	6 дивизий — 115 км
ВСЕГО	28 дивизий, сводные и специальные части	8 (211 пд?)	2	2	4	5	49 дивизий, сводные и специальные части на фронте 600—615 км

The combat composition of the 20th Army by January 10, 1942

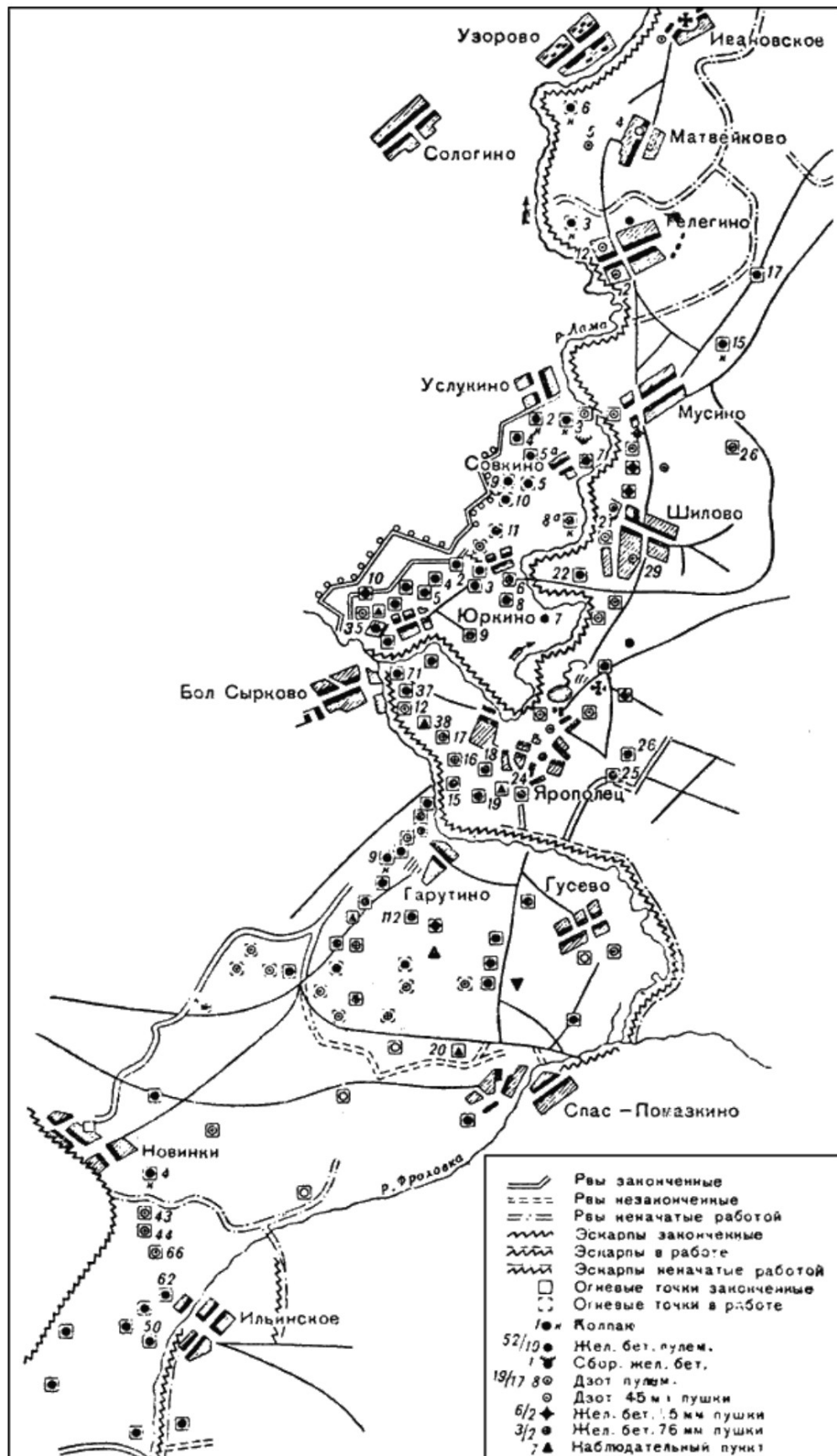
Соединения стрелковые и кавалерийские*	Части усиления				тыловые
	танковые	артиллерийские	инженерные	связи	
331-я, 352-я стрелковые дивизии; 1-я** гвардейская, 17-я*, 28-я, 35-я, 40-я, 49-я**, 55-я стрелковые бригады; 108-й, 109-й, 110-й, 112-й и 113-й лыжные батальо- ны; 2-й гвардейский кавалерий- ский корпус (3-я и 4-я гвардей- ские и 20-я кавалерийские дивизии)	1-я** гвардейская, 17-я, 22-я, 24-я, 31-я и 145-я танковые бригады	517-й артиллерийский полк РГК; 544-й гаубичный артил- лерийский полк большой мощности (БМ); 138-й, 471-й, 523-й, 528-й и 537-й пушеч- ные артиллерийские полки РГК; 55-й и 53-й бронепоез- да; 2-й, 7-й, 15-й, 17-й и 35-й отдельные гвардейские ми- нометные дивизионы; 483-й артиллерийский полк ПТО	85-й мостовой строи- тельный батальон, 226-й инженерный батальон, 127-й и 129-й сапер- ные батальоны, 352-й инженерно- строительный батальон	104-й полк свя- зи, 713-й от- дельный ли- нейный бата- льон связи	796-й авто- мобильный батальон
Всего: 2 стрелковые дивизии; 8 стрелковых бригад; 5 лыжных батальонов, 3 кавалерийские дивизии; орудий — 395, минометов — 450, танков — 100	6 танковых бригад	7 артиллерийских полков РГК; 1 артиллерийский полк ПТО; 5 отдельных гвардей- ских минометных диви- зионов; 2 бронепоезда	5 батальонов	1 полк связи; 1 отдельный линейный ба- тальон связи	1 автомо- бильный ба- тальон

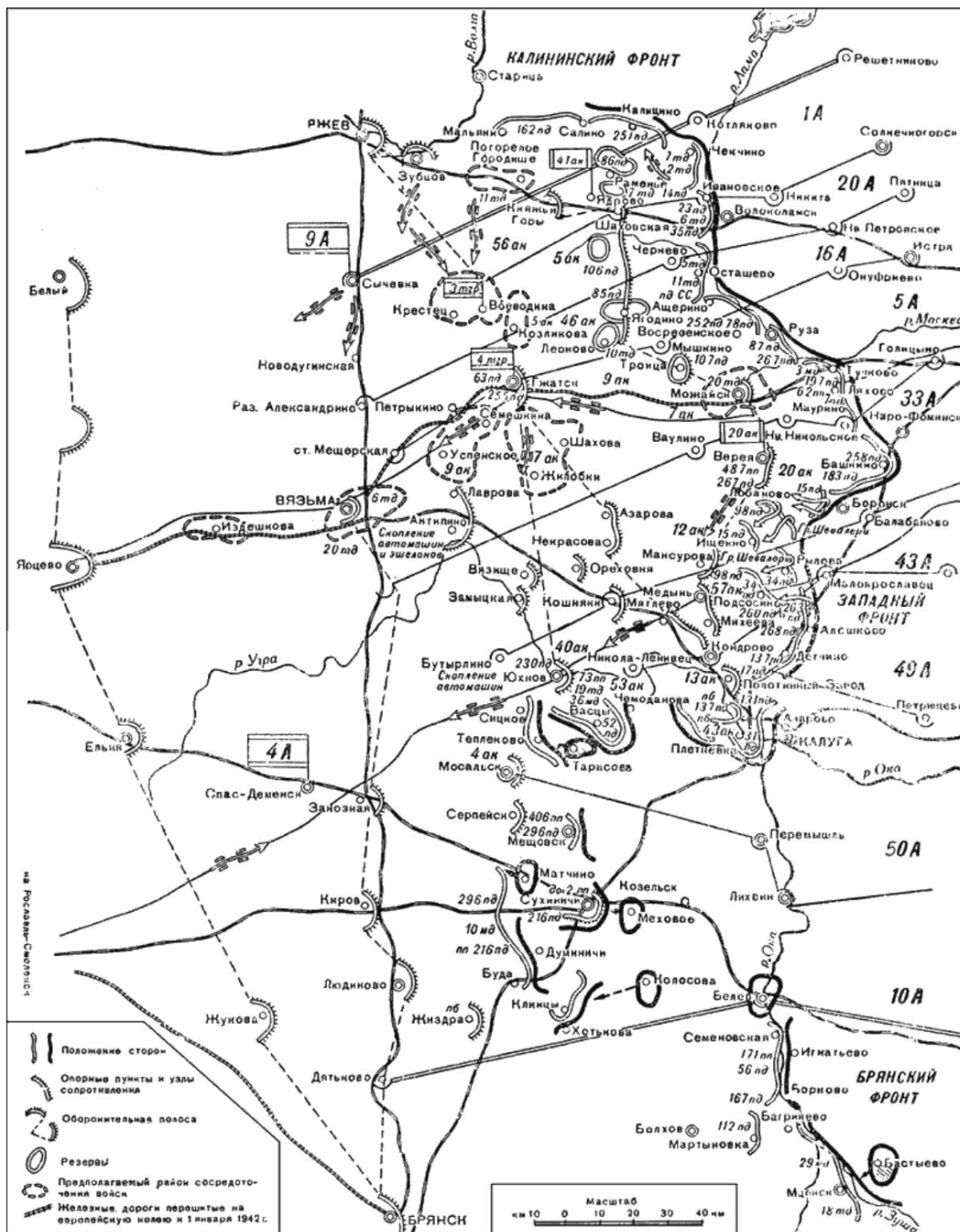
*

** Remizov group.

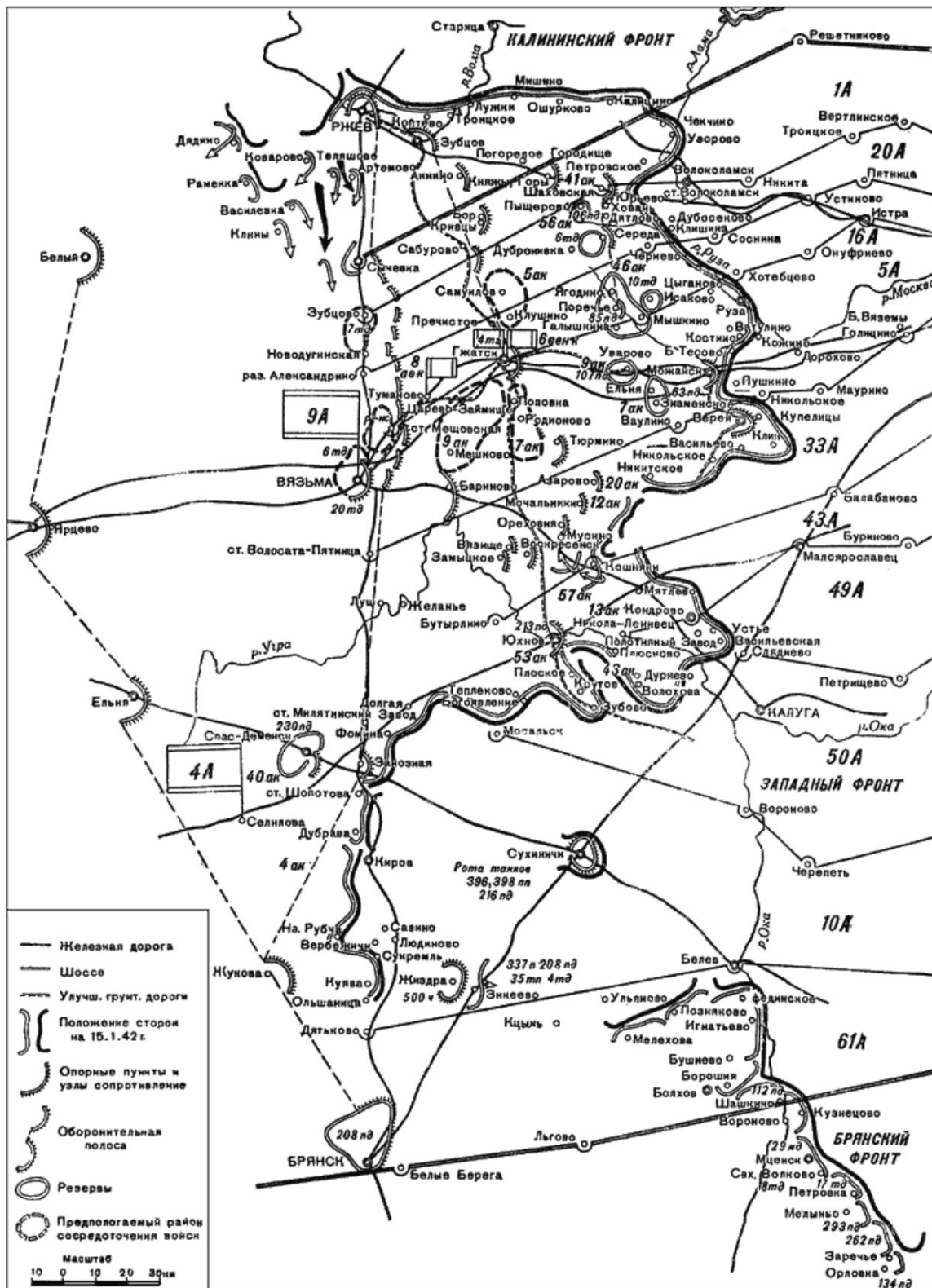
Katukov group

Maps and diagrams for book three



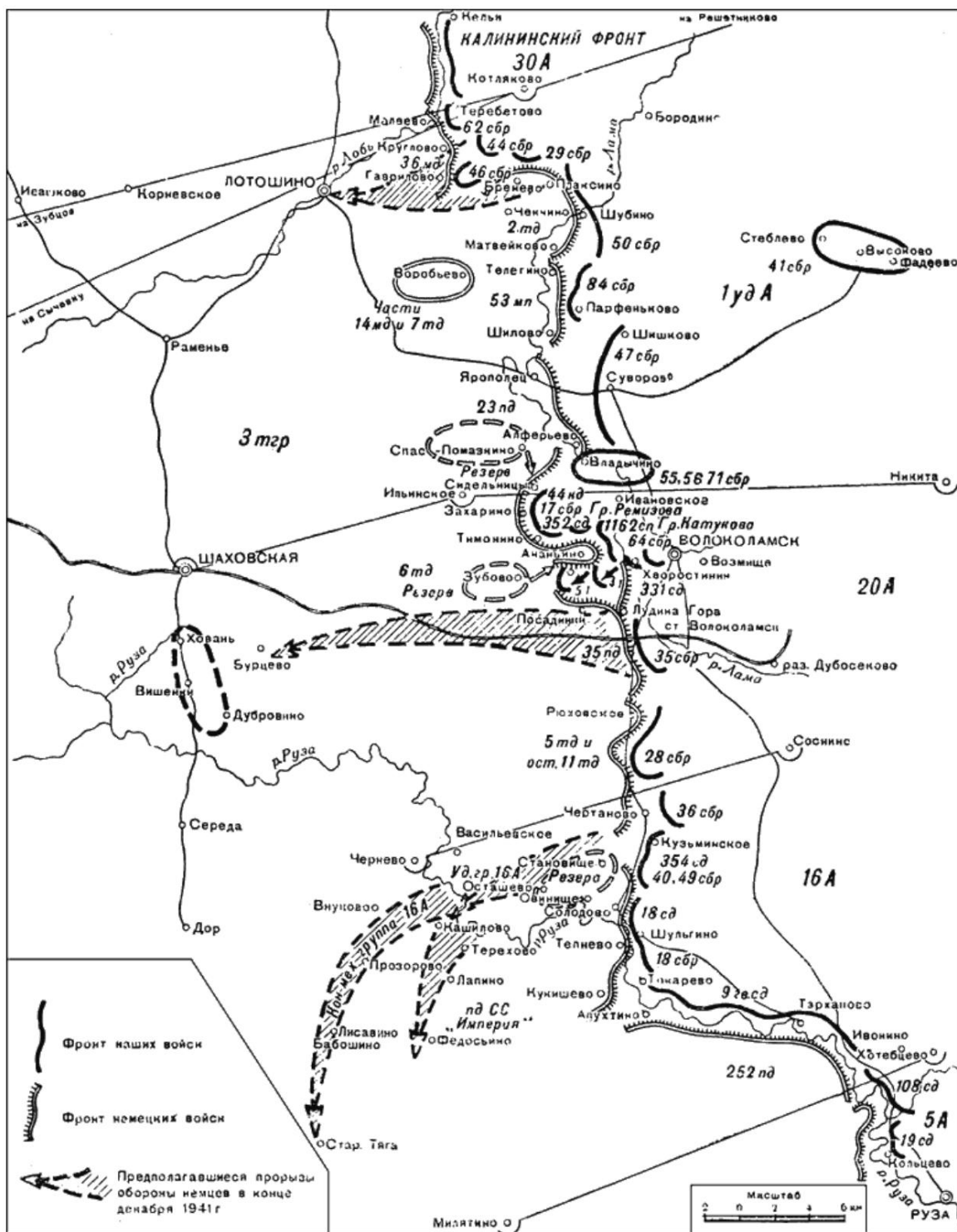


Scheme 2. The position of the enemy on January 5, 1942 and the front line



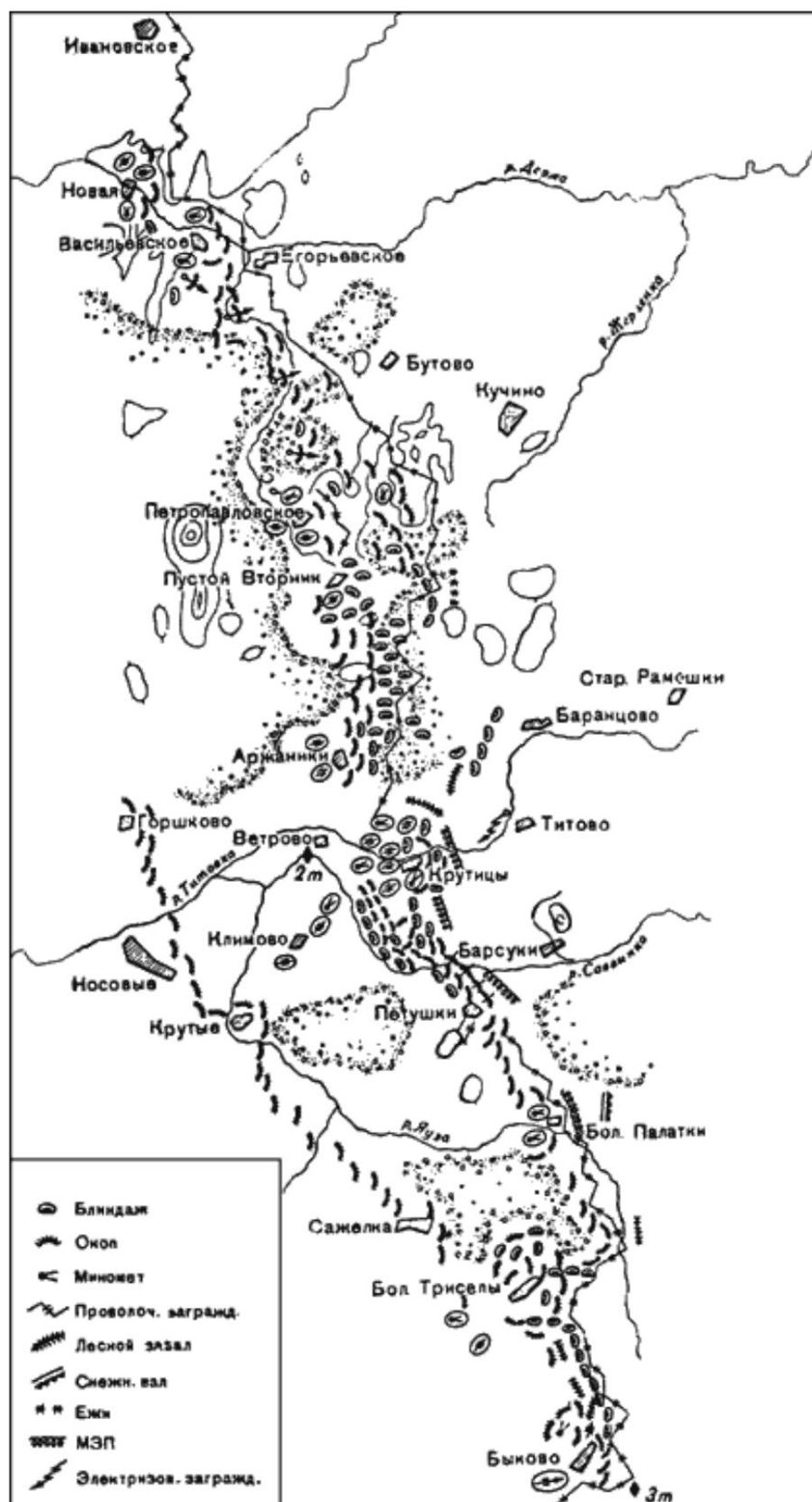
Scheme 3. The enemy grouping in front of the Western Front and the front line on January 15

Scheme 4. The position of the enemy and the front line on January 25

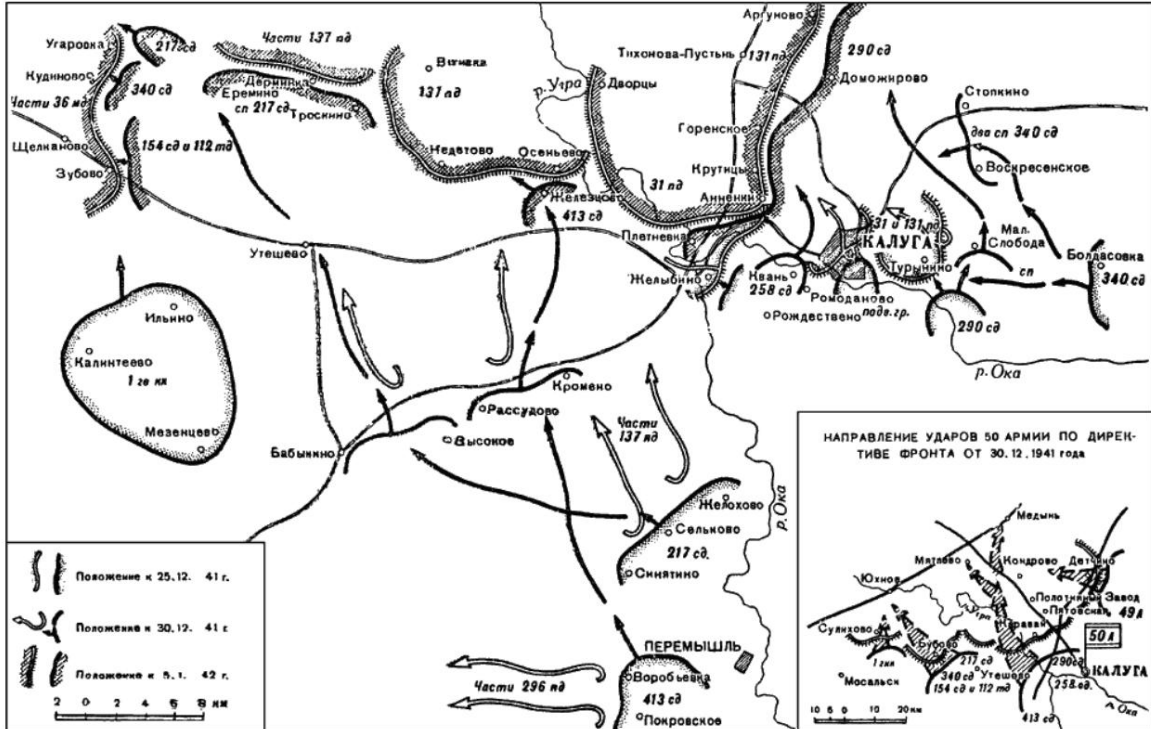


Scheme 5. The situation on the right wing of the Western Front in the period from December 25, 1941, to January 8, 1942

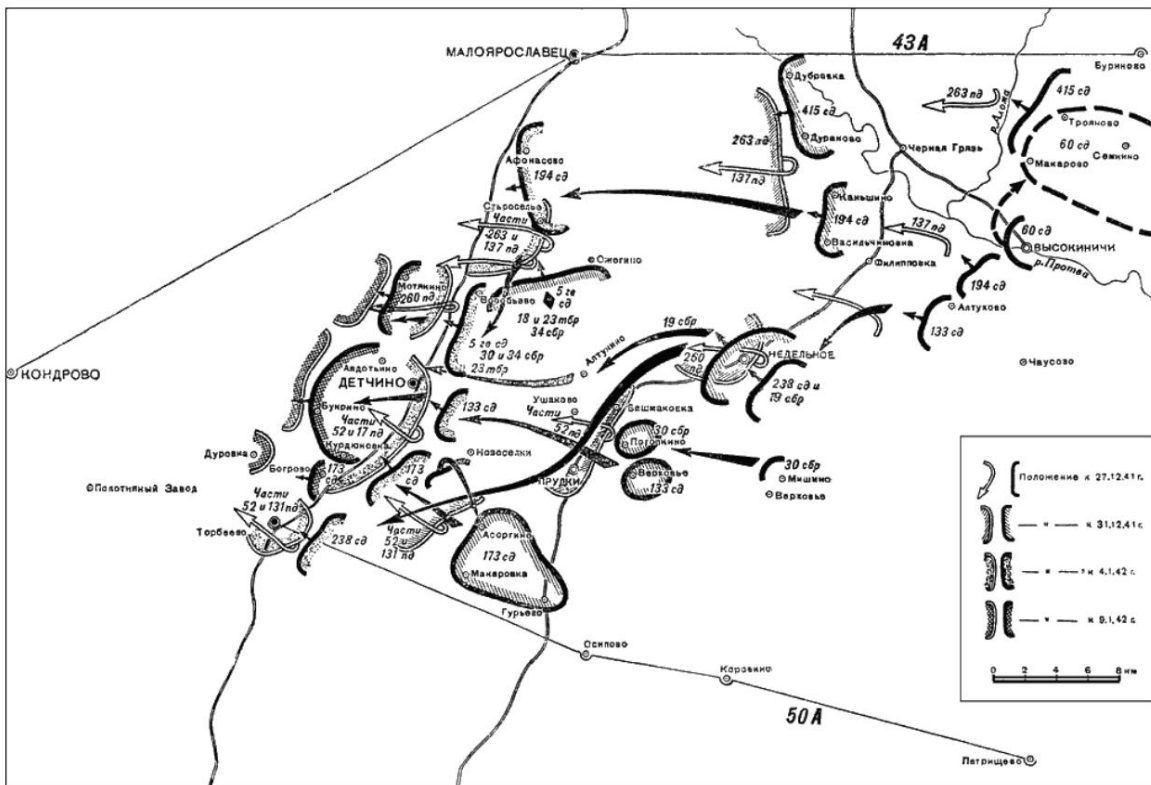
Western Front from December 25, 1941 to January 17, 1942



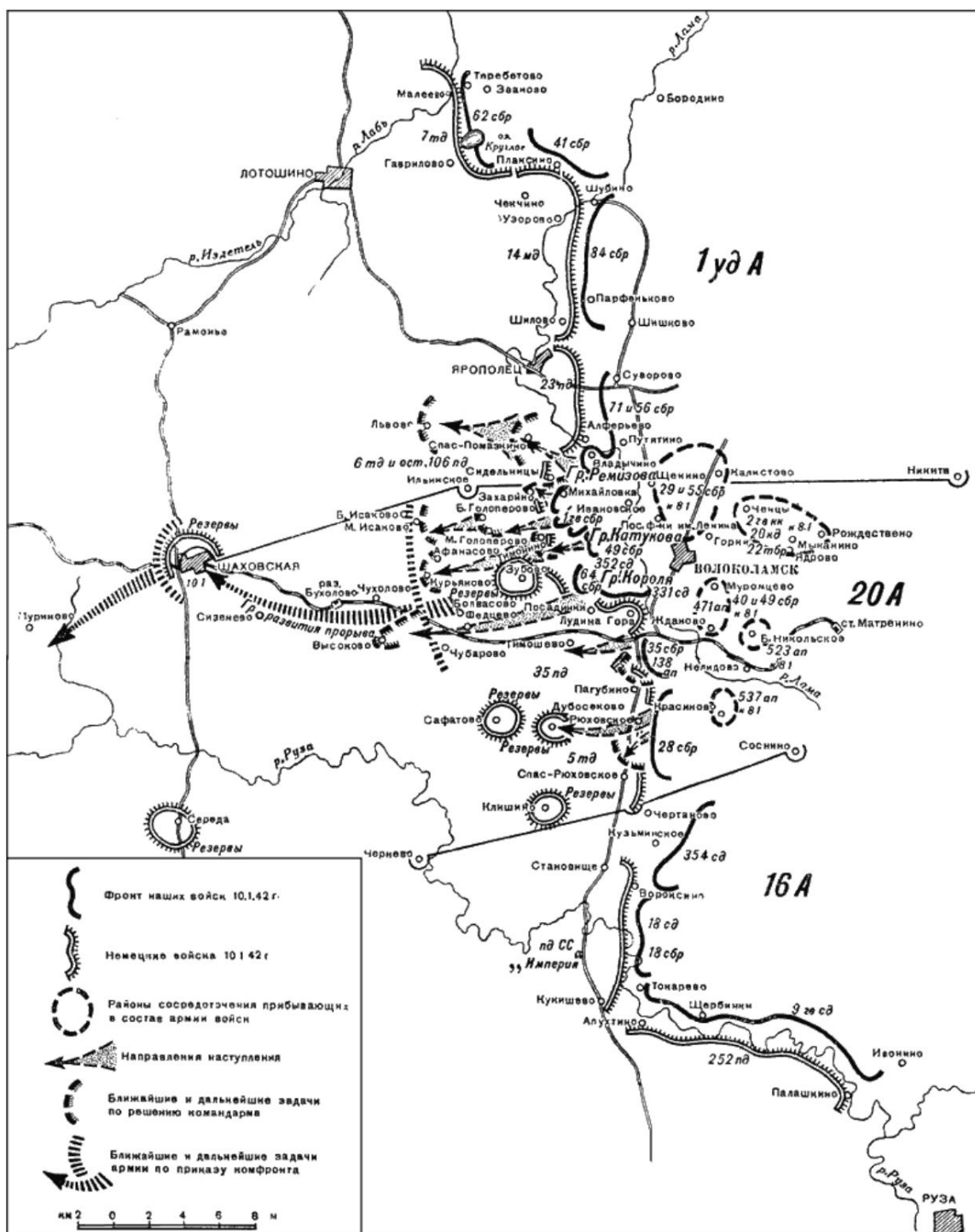
Scheme 7. Scheme of the enemy's fortified lines in front of the 20th army by the end of January 1942



Scheme 8. Combat operations on the front of the 50th Army since December 25, 1941 of the year, to January 5, 1942 (the second stage of the Kaluga operation)

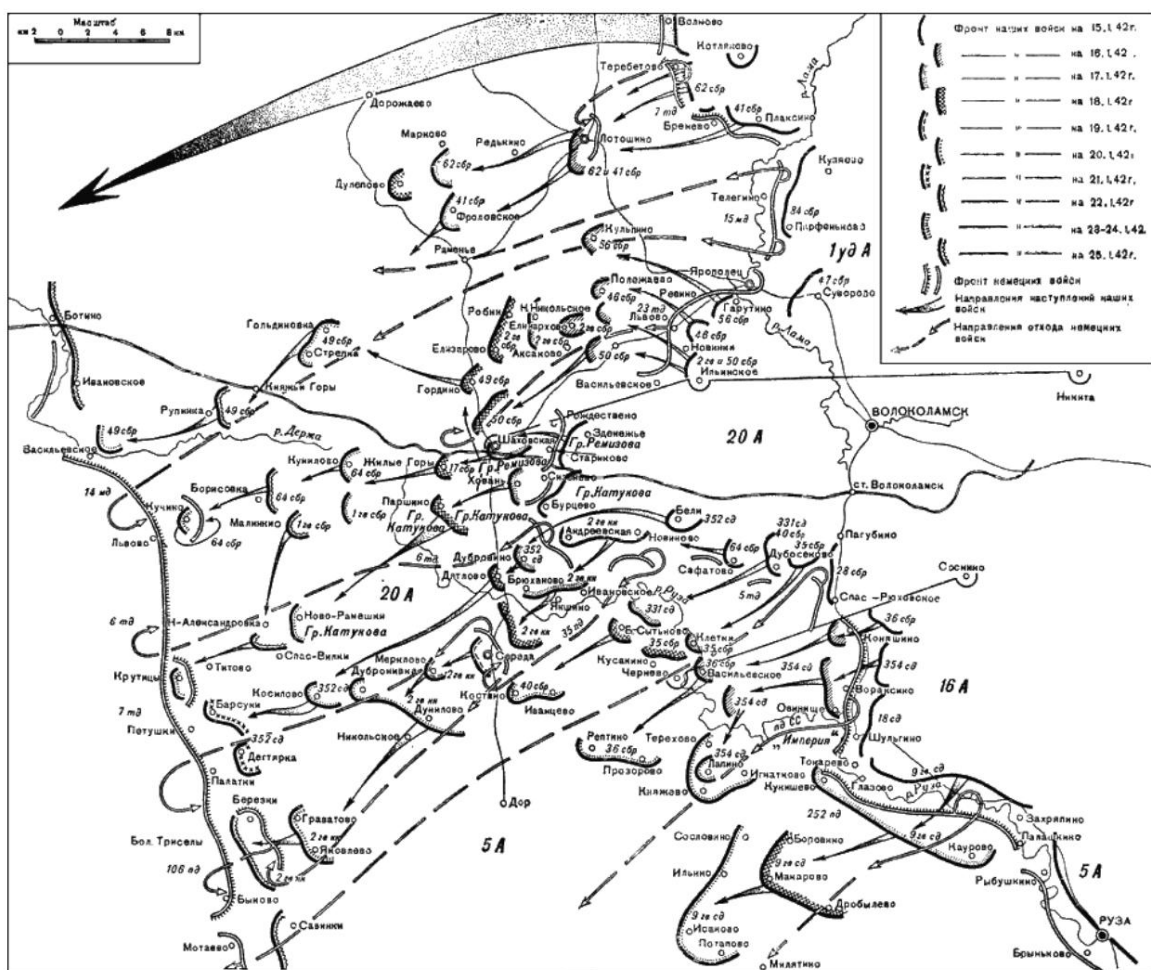


Scheme 9. Fighting on the front of the 49th Army from December 27, 1941 to January 9, 1942



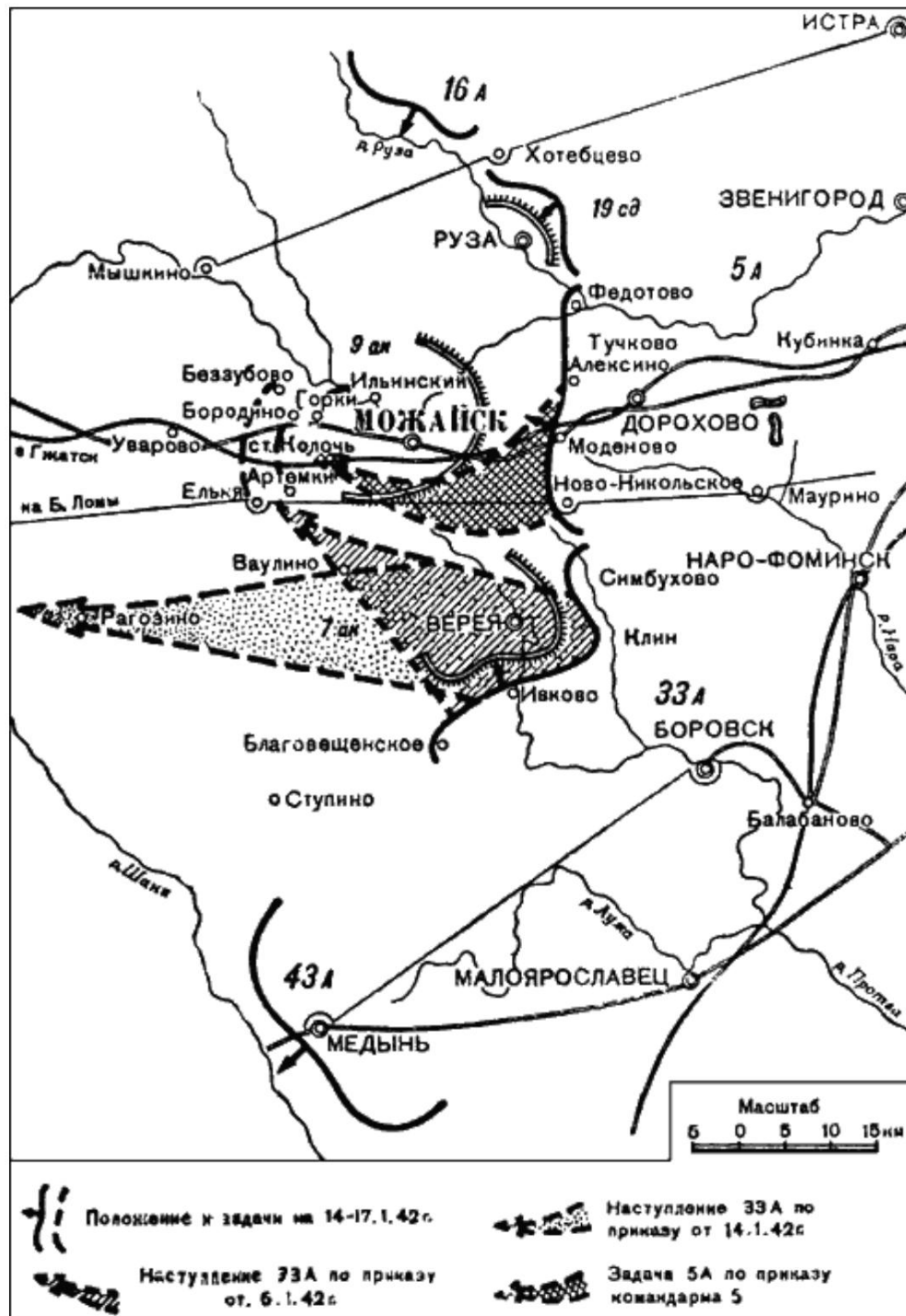
Scheme 10. Plan for breaking through the German defenses in the sector of the 20 Army

of the year

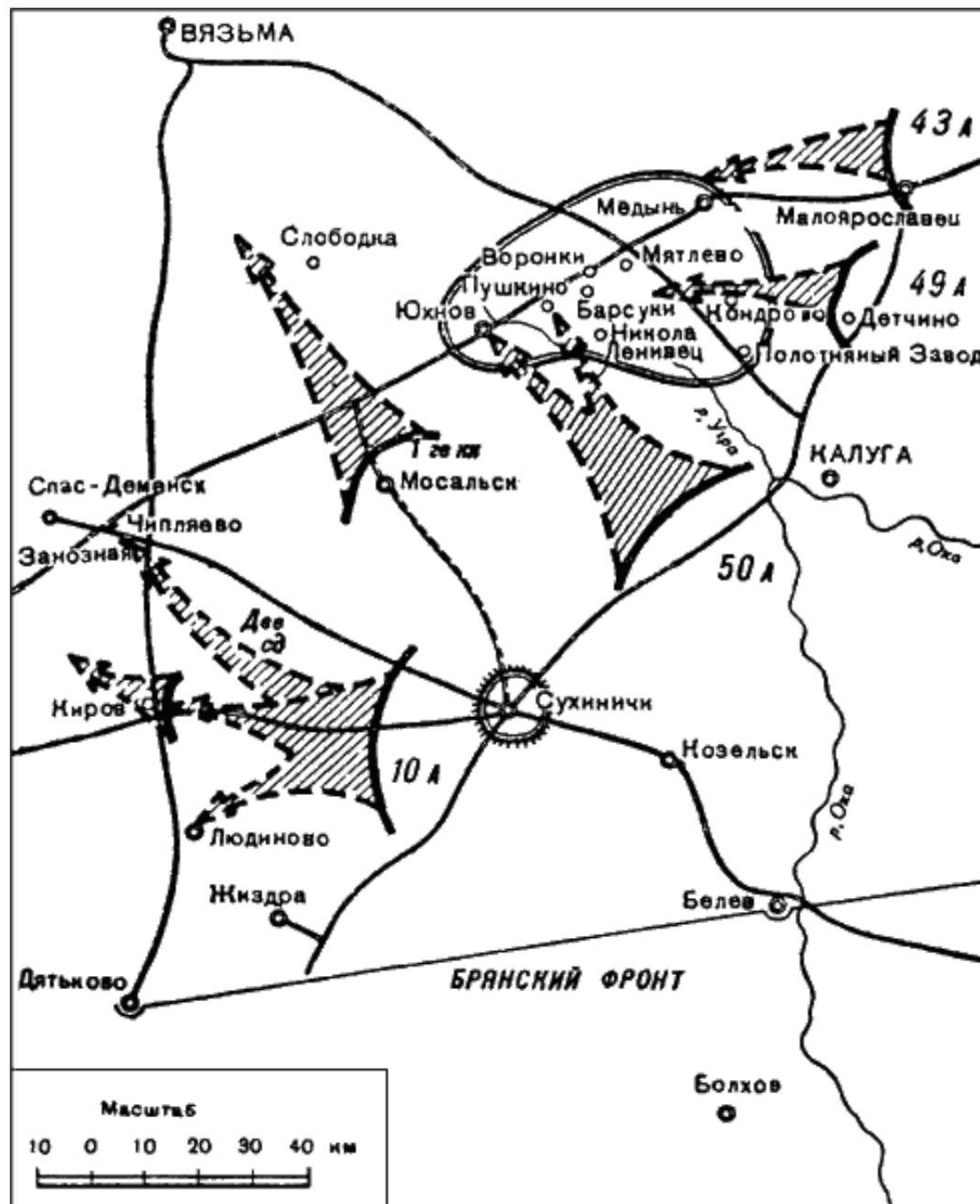


Scheme 12. The development of the breakthrough of the 20th Army in the period from January 15 to January 25, 1942

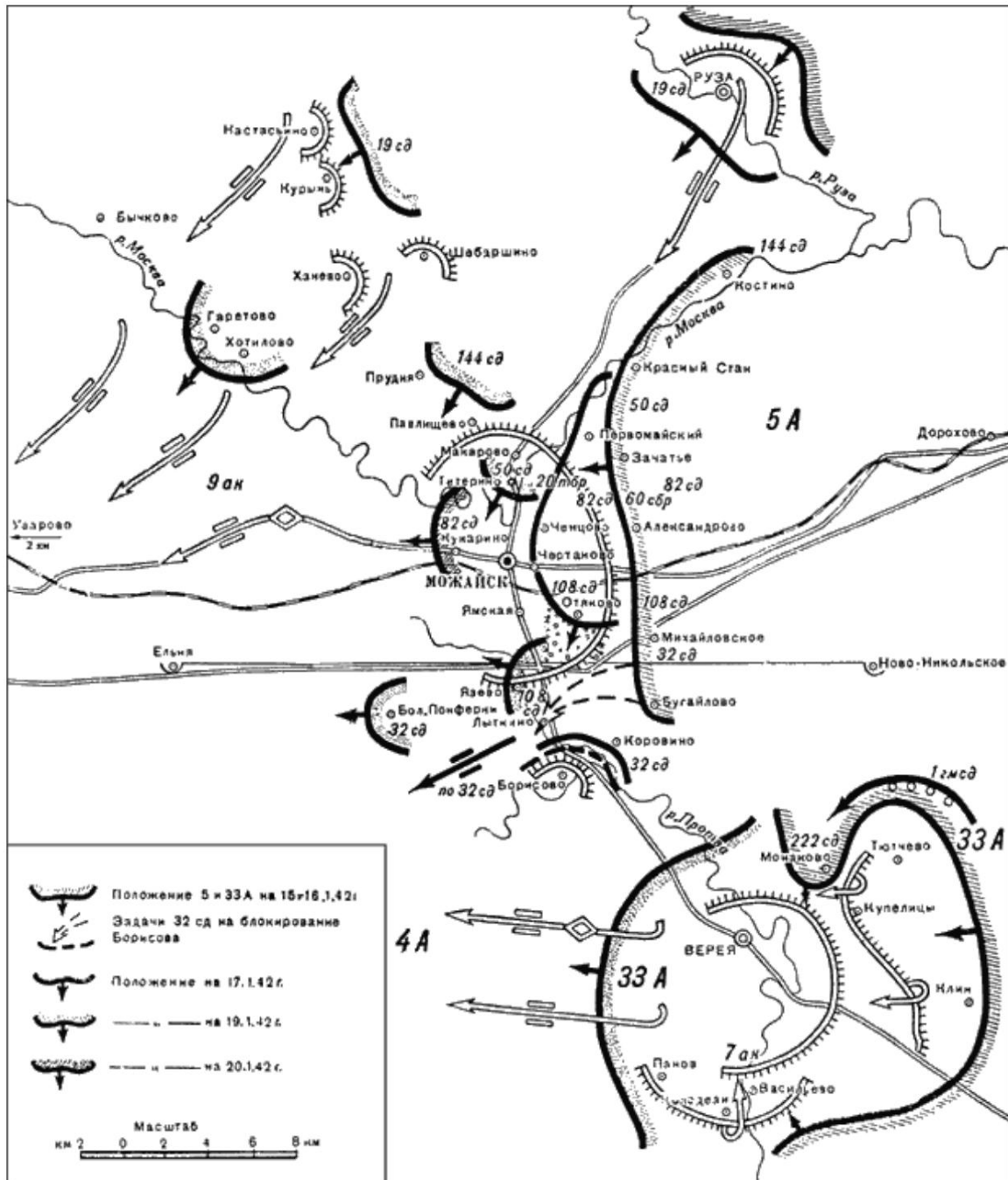
Scheme 13. Combat operations of the 10th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in capturing Belev and Kozelsk and developing the offensive on Yukhnov and Sukhinichi (from December 26, 1941 to January 8, 1942)



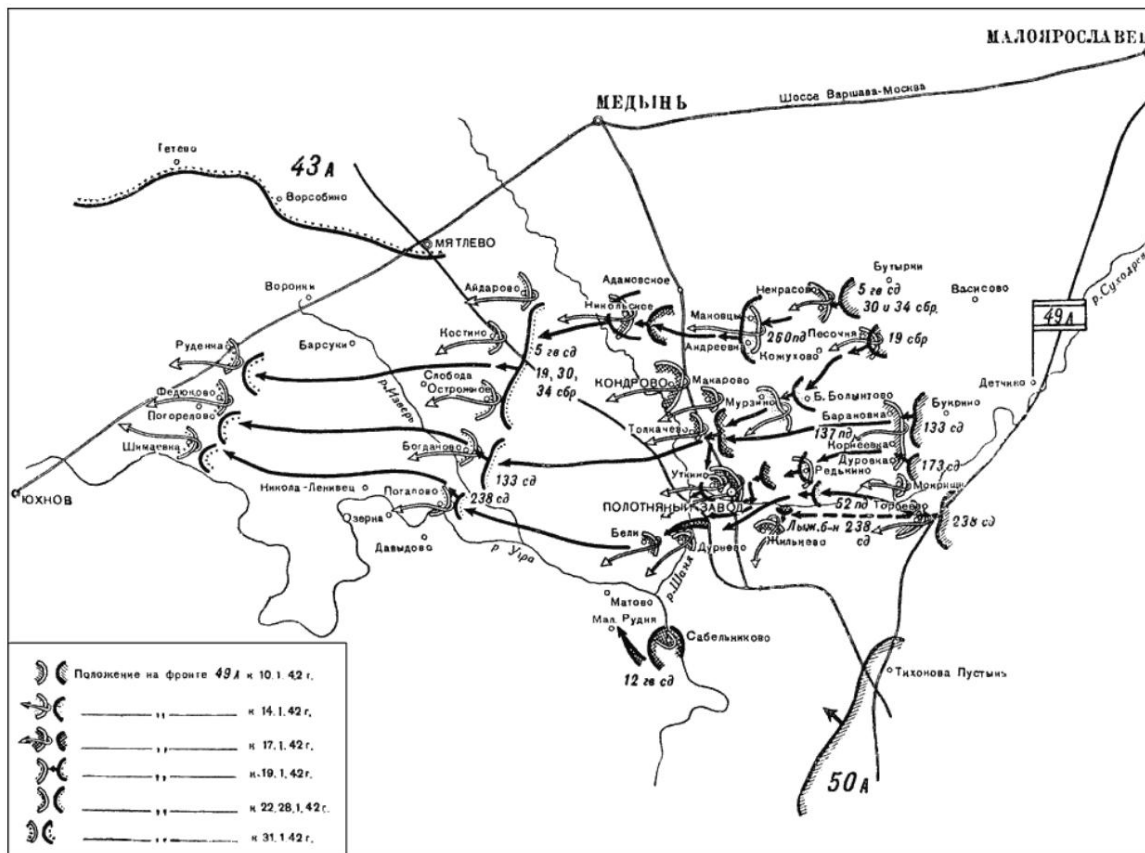
Scheme 14. Plans of the front and army command



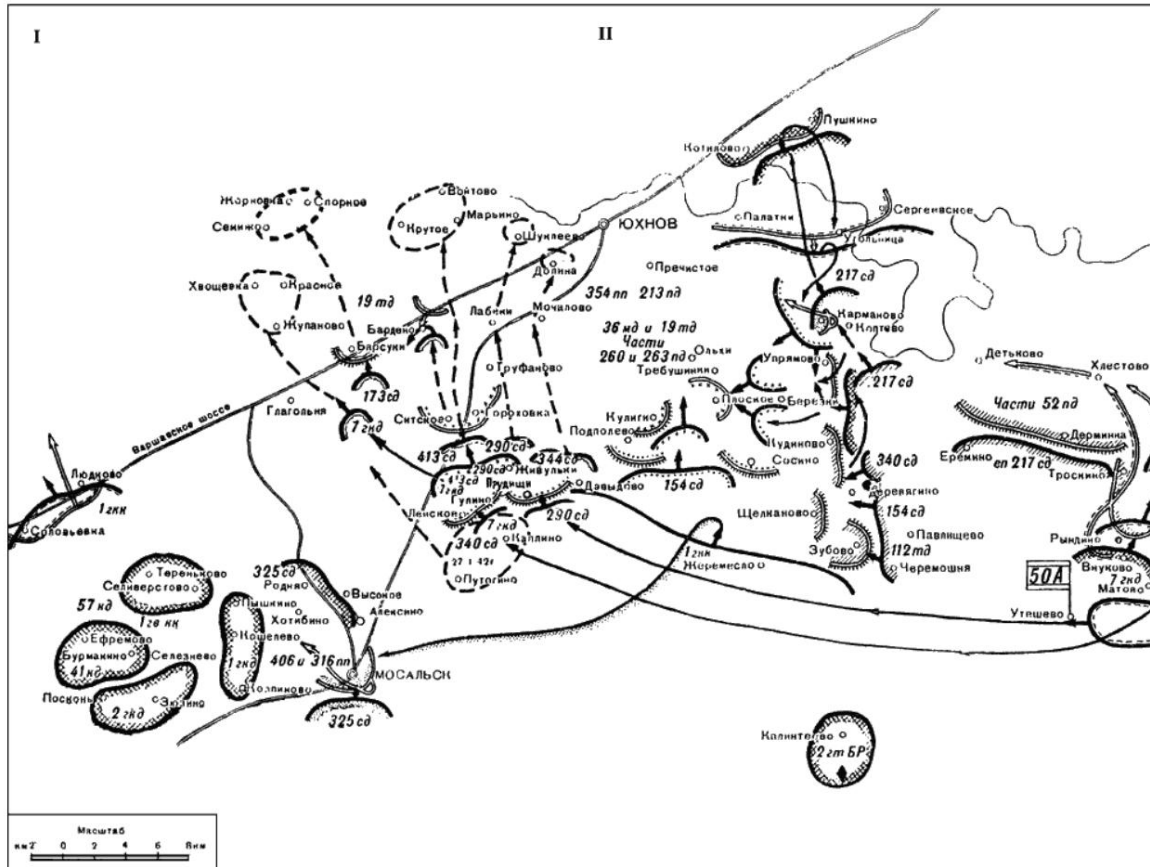
Scheme 15. General tasks of the army of the left wing according to the directive Western Front No. 269 of January 9, 1942



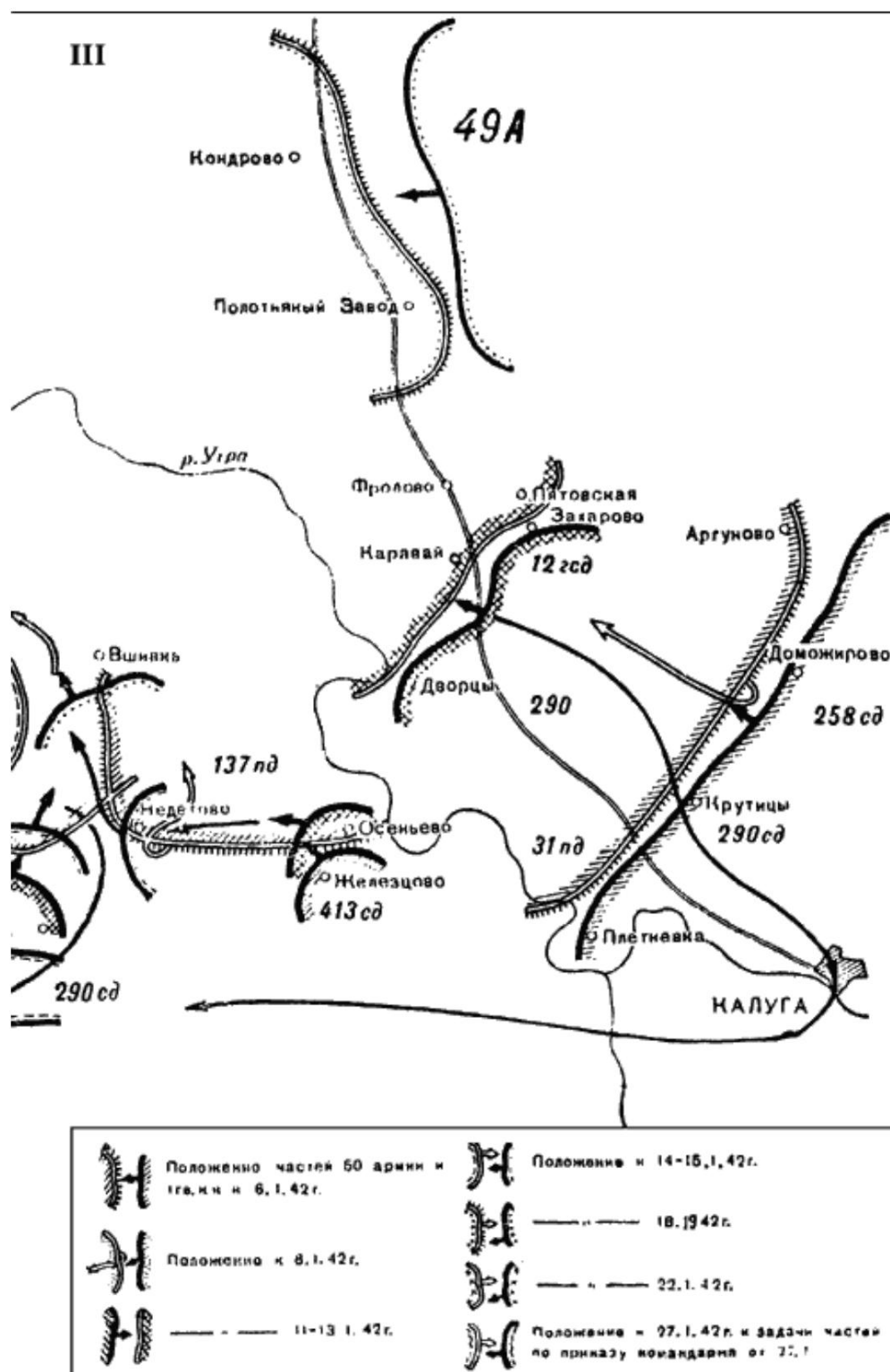
Scheme 16



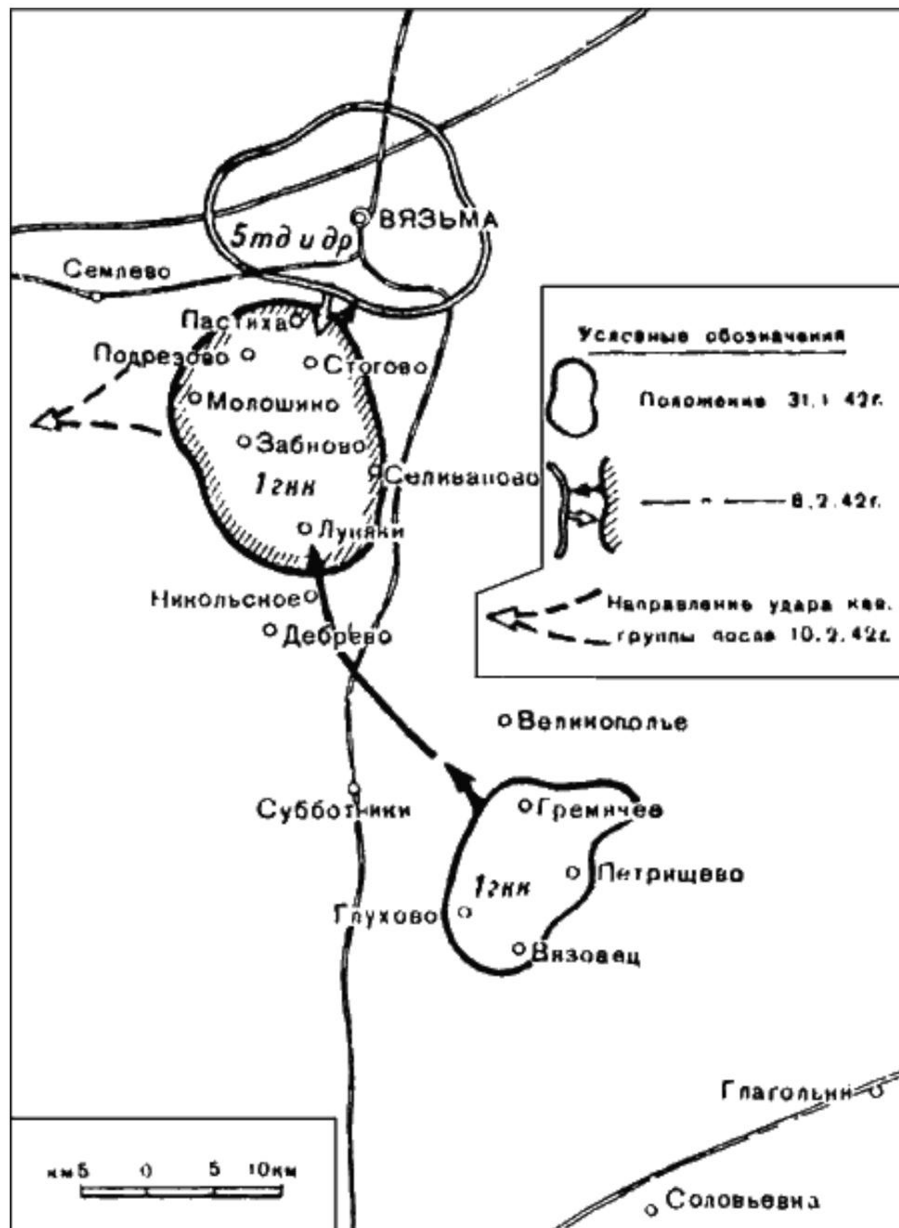
Scheme 17. The battles of the 49th Army for Kondrovo, the Linen Factory and the development of the offensive until reaching the Warsaw highway (from January 9 to January 31, 1942)



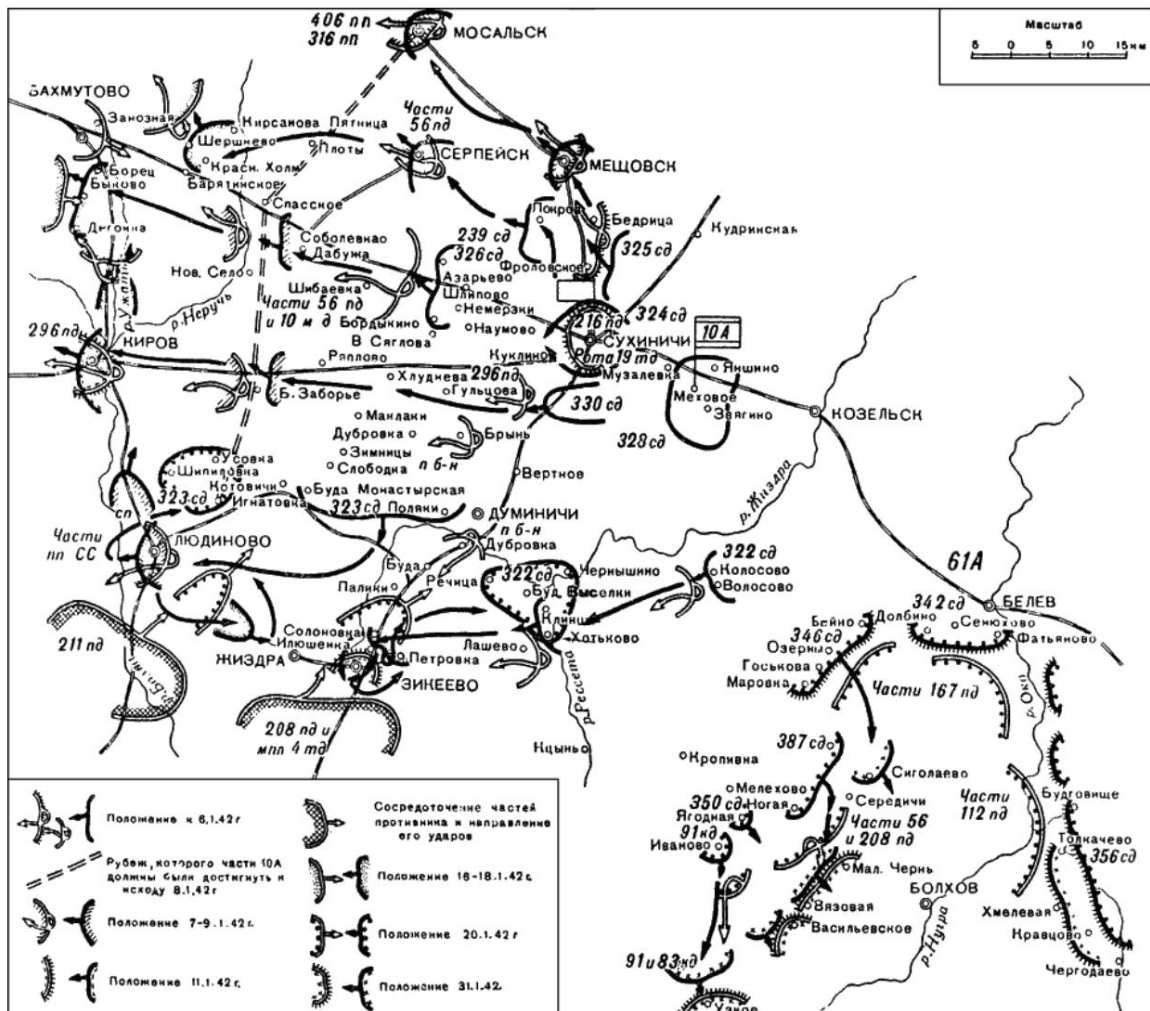
Scheme 18. Combat operations on the front of the 50th Army and the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in the Yekhnov direction in January 1942



Continuation of scheme 18



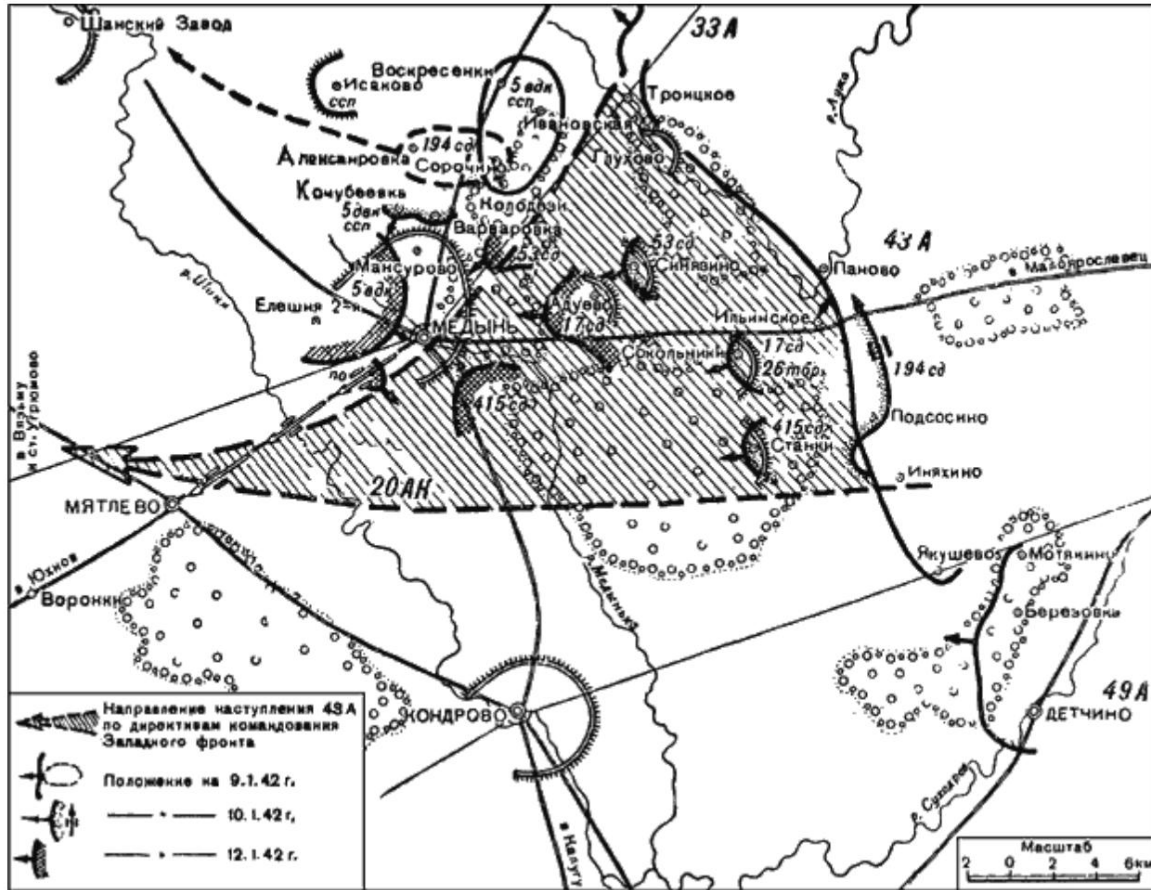
Scheme 18a. The offensive of the 1st Guards. cavalry corps on Vyazma January 31 - February 10, 1942



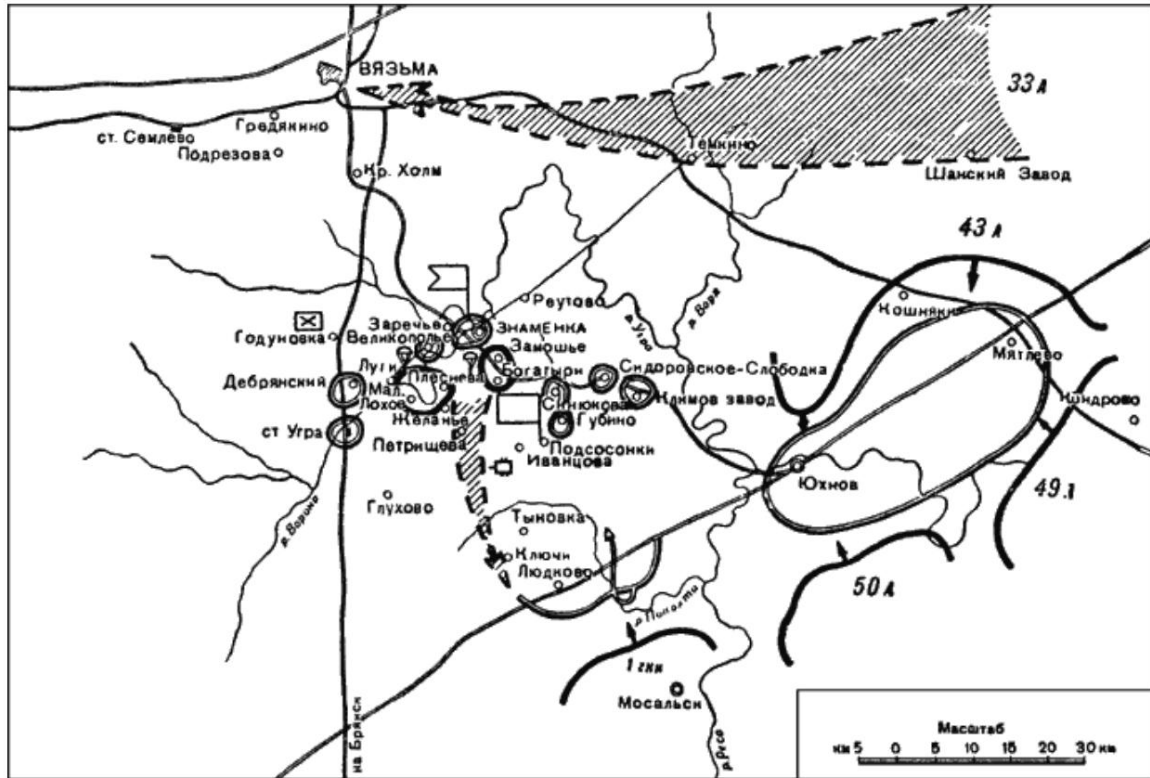
Scheme 19. Fighting on the front of the 10th and 61st armies in January 1942

Scheme 20

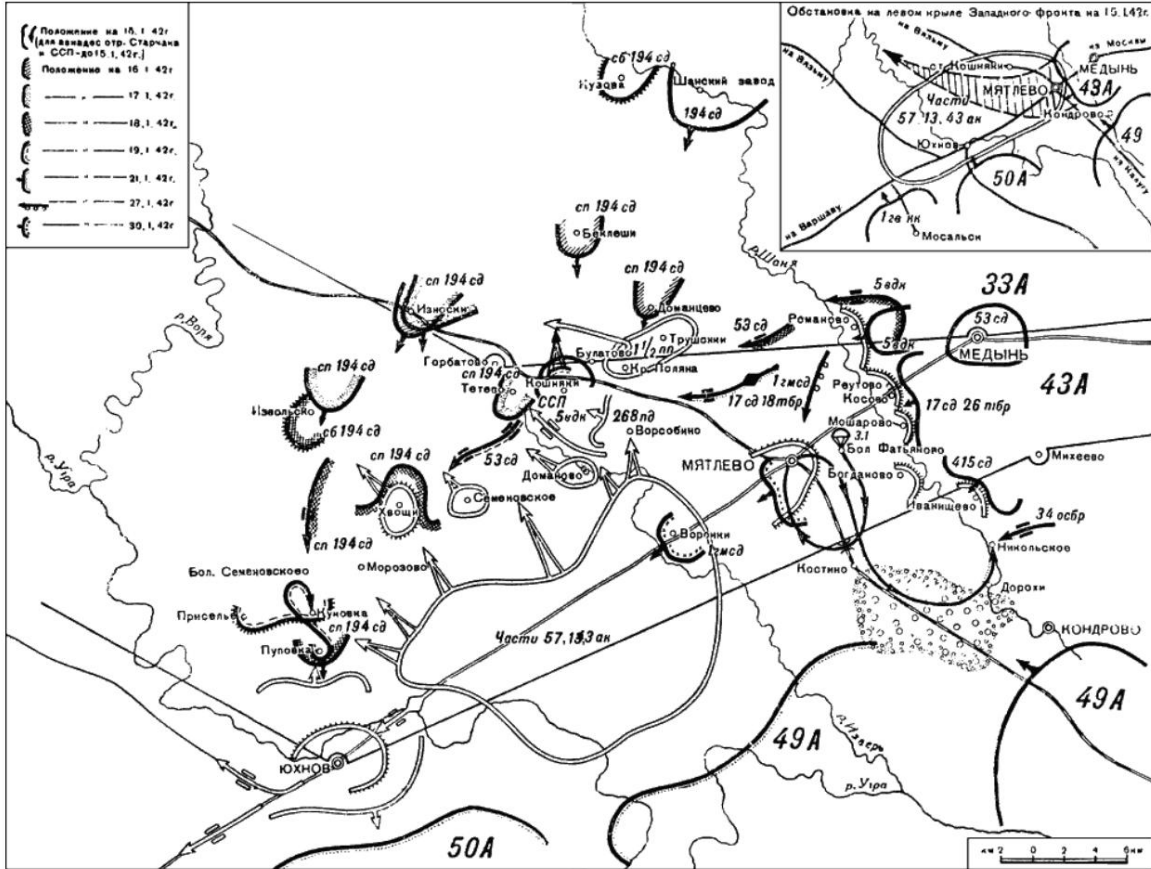
enemy front (situation on January 17, 1942)



Scheme 21. The first stage of the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation. Attack on Medyn (January 9-12, 1942)

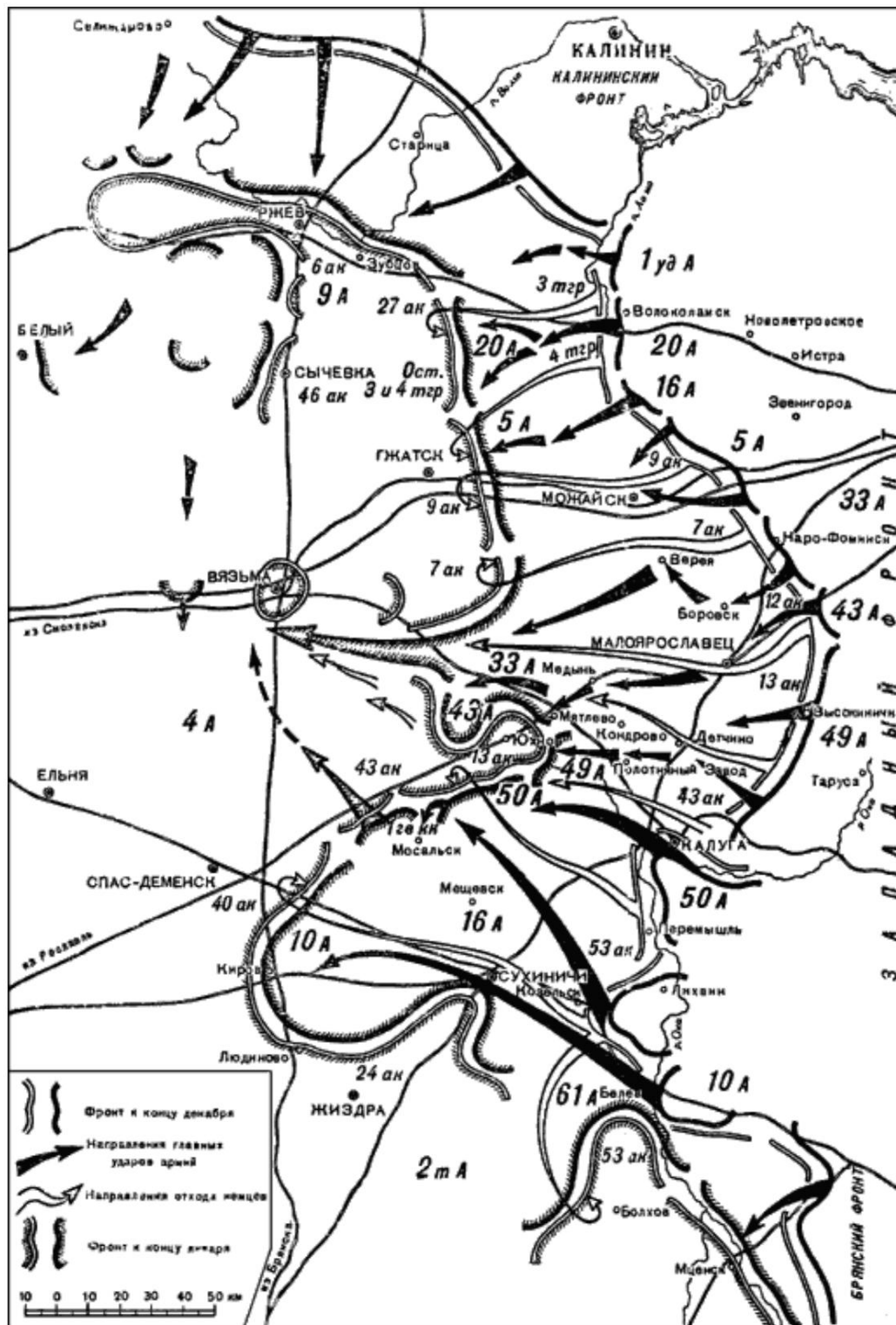


Scheme 22. Actions of the airborne detachment of the 250th air
airborne regiment (from January 18 to January 28, 1942)



Scheme 23. The second stage of the Medynsko-Myatlevskaya operation. The attack on Myatlevo and the maneuver to encircle the enemy (from January 15 to January 30, 1942)

Scheme 24. The offensive of the 33rd Army on Vyazma (January 20–31, 1942)



Scheme 26. The offensive of the Western Front in January 1942

Annex I

Comments

1. These data on the losses of the German armed forces are obviously overestimated, which could well be expected from a study published before the end of the war, in 1943.

However, there is considerable discrepancy in the German data as well. The Chief of the General Staff of the German Ground Forces F. Halder wrote the following about the losses of the Wehrmacht by the beginning of the battle for Moscow:

“Losses from June 22 to September 26, 1941: 12,604 officers and 385,326 non-commissioned officers and privates were wounded; killed - 4864 officers and 108 487 non-commissioned officers and privates; missing - 416 officers and 23,273 non-commissioned officers and privates. In total, 17,884 officers and 517,086 non-commissioned officers and enlisted men were lost. The total losses of the entire army on the Eastern Front (not counting the sick) amounted to 534,970 people ”[139]

According to the latest information from the German historian R. Overmans, the losses of the Wehrmacht killed on the Eastern Front amounted to 25,000 people in June 1941, 63,099 in July, 46,066 in August and 51,033 in September, that is, only the losses of those killed amounted to 185,198 people, which is significantly higher than those indicated by F. Halder of figures. If we assume that the ratio between the losses of those killed and the total losses in Halder's data is true and take the figure of Overmans as the number of those killed, then the total losses of the Wehrmacht by the beginning of the battle for Moscow amounted to about 925 thousand people.[140] Thus, the overestimation in Shaposhnikov's work is approximately twofold.

Losses of armored vehicles can be estimated from the following data. According to a study on the history of German tank forces by Thomas Jentz, in all theaters of military operations, Germany lost from June to September 271 Pz.Kpfw.II tanks, 460 Pz.Kpfw.38 (t) tanks, 500 Pz.Kpfw.III tanks of all types, 220 tanks Pz.Kpfw.IV. This allows us to assert that only the irretrievable losses of tanks in the East amount to at least 1500 vehicles.[141] In addition, a significant proportion of the machines were under repair. As an example, consider

tank fleet of the 2nd and 3rd tank groups allocated for the attack on Moscow:

The state of the tank fleet of the 2nd and 3rd tank groups of the Wehrmacht on September 4, 1941 [142]

	Танковая дивизия	Число танков			
		на 22 июня	потери	в ремонте	боеготовы
2-я ТГр.	3-я тд	198	157	—	41
	4-я тд	169	120	—	49
	10-я тд	206	25	22	159
	17-я тд	180	142	—	38
	18-я тд	200	138	—	62
3-я ТГр.	7-я тд	299	82	87	130
	19-я тд	239	90	47	102
	20-я тд	245	95	62	88

As we can see, out of 1736 combat vehicles on June 22, 1941, by September 4, only 669 vehicles were combat-ready. According to the diary of F. Halder, by the beginning of the operation against Moscow, Guderian's 2nd tank group had about 50 % of the regular composition of the tanks, in the remaining tank groups - 70-80 %.

2. The tasks of the German troops in the Moscow direction were determined in Directive No. 35 of the Wehrmacht High Command, signed by Hitler on September 6, 1941. The Soviet troops of the Western direction, named in Directive No. 35 "Timoshenko's army group" were to be "decisively defeated before the onset of winter." This task was supposed to be solved by "a double encirclement in the general direction of Vyazma in the presence of powerful tank forces concentrated on the flanks." [143] Ten days later, on September 16, a directive appeared from the command of Army Group Center on the preparation of the operation. From a general view in Hitler's directive at the headquarters of Army Group Center, they moved on to specific tasks for the armies in the Moscow direction:

"The 4th and 9th armies with the 4th and 3rd tank groups subordinate to them, which by the time of the offensive should be reinforced by at least one infantry corps each, are put on alert in such a way that each of armies at

the help of a strong strike group, consisting of motorized, tank and infantry formations, could break through the enemy defenses on both sides of the Roslavl-Moscow road and north of the highway and destroy enemy troops sandwiched between the inner flanks. For this purpose, they will have to cover themselves from the east and, depending on the situation, make a turn either against the common line Vyazma - Dorogobuzh, or from both sides to Vyazma. [144] —

The 2nd Panzer Group, still engaged in the battles near Kiev, received the task in the operation. It was supposed to "be concentrated mainly in the area of Rylsk, Pochep, Novgorod-Seversky with the aim of striking through the Orel-Bryansk line." Under the same directive, the operation received the code name "Typhoon" (Taifun).

3. Today we have fairly accurate information about the plans of the German command and their changes during the offensive. On September 26, 1941, Field Marshal von Bock issued order No. 1620/41 to the troops of Army Group Center on the offensive, which read:

"1. After a long break, the army group moves into offensive. 2.

The 4th Army attacks with the attached 4th Panzer Group, concentrating on both sides of the Roslavl-Moscow highway. After a successful breakthrough, the army turns to attack the Smolensk-Moscow highway on both sides of Vyazma, while protecting the eastern

flank. 3. The 9th Army, with the attached 3rd Panzer Group, breaks through enemy positions between the highway and the Bely region and advances towards the Vyazma-Rzhev road. The main blow is delivered in the direction of the Hill by strong infantry with continuous support from mobile troops; it means that they will turn east of the upper Dnieper to the highway near and west of Vyazma, while protecting their eastern flank. The road from Etkino to Bely must be captured to ensure the supply of their troops.

4. A diversionary offensive is planned between the inner flanks of the 4th and 9th armies, between the Yelnya area and the highway, u

this edge is not required for other operations. Individual strikes should be concentrated and, as far as possible, offer limited targets to the opponent.

5. The 2nd Army defends the flank of the 4th Army. In addition, it breaks through the positions on the Desna with a concentration of efforts on the northern flank and advances in the direction of Sukhinichi-Meshchevsk. This army covers the city and the

industrial region of Bryansk-Ordzhonikidzeograd. In the event that the city and the industrial area (especially roads and crossings) can be captured by surprise, the army will follow this direction, regardless of the demarcation line

with the 2nd Panzer Group. 6. The 2nd Panzer Group attacks (presumably two days before the army advances) across the Orel-Bryansk line. The right flank follows the course of the Oka and Svopa. The left flank rolls over the positions on the Desna from the south and destroys the enemy on the southeastern bank of

the Desna in cooperation with the 2nd Army. The city and the industrial region of Bryansk-Ordzhonikidzeograd must be captured by mobile units, if this is possible on the first attempt. Otherwise, they must be temporarily bypassed and taken by the forces of the XXXV Army Corps, together^[146] with the air force.

We see that the cities of Tula and Kalinin were absent in the original plan. Kalinin appeared only in the "Order to continue the operation in the direction of Moscow" dated October 7, 1941. In the same order, Tula was designated as the target of the offensive of G. Guderian's troops:

"The 2nd Panzer Army is advancing as quickly as possible to Tula and seizing the crossings for further advance, not only in the direction of Kolomna, but also in the direction of Kashira-Serpukhov."^[147]

In the order of the command of Army Group Center dated October 14, 1941, the tasks were detailed. It said:

“The 4th Panzer Group and the 4th Army without delay strike in the direction of Moscow, with the aim of defeating the enemy forces in front of Moscow, firmly capturing the area surrounding Moscow, and also tightly surrounding the city. For this purpose, the 2nd Panzer Army should go to the area southeast of Moscow in such a way that, covering from the east, cover Moscow from the southeast, and later also from the east. The industrial regions of Stalinogorsk, Tula and Kashira, which are of great importance for supplying Moscow, must be captured and securely covered as soon as possible.[148]

Thus, we can conclude that the team of authors under the leadership of B. M. Shaposhnikov somewhat hastened the events, assuming the existence of a detailed plan of operations for the capture of Moscow already in September 1941. Tula and Kalinin, as well as the surroundings of Moscow, were among the goals of the German offensive clearly identified in the governing documents after the start of the Typhoon. Prior to this, only "the defeat of Tymoshenko's armies" was designated as a goal.

4. The losses were very serious. The Germans announced huge numbers of losses of Soviet troops even by the standards of 1941. On October 19, 1941, the commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, wrote in a daytime order to his troops:

“The battle for Vyazma and Bryansk led to the collapse of the Russian front echeloned in depth. Eight Russian armies, consisting of 73 infantry and cavalry divisions, 13 tank divisions and brigades, and strong army artillery, were destroyed in a hard struggle against a far superior enemy. The total trophies were: 673,098 prisoners, 1,277 tanks, 4,378 artillery pieces, 1,009 anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, 87 aircraft, and huge quantities of military supplies.[149]

Near Vyazma, 37 divisions, 9 tank brigades, 31 artillery regiments of the RGK, and controls of the 19th, 20th, 24th and 32nd armies of the Western and Reserve fronts were surrounded. Organizationally, these troops were part of the 22nd, 30th, 19th, 20th, 24th, 43rd, 31st, 32nd and 49th armies and operational

Boldin groups. Near Bryansk, 27 divisions, 2 tank brigades, 19 artillery regiments of the RGK and the directorates of the 50th, 3rd and 13th armies of the Bryansk Front were surrounded. In total, seven army directorates were surrounded (out of 15 in total in the western direction), 64 divisions (out of 95), 11 tank brigades (out of 13) and 50 artillery regiments of the RGK (out of 64). These formations and units were part of 13 armies and one operational group. On October 2, 1941, the troops of the Western Front numbered 545,935 people, the Reserve - 478,508 people. When G.K. Zhukov took command of these fronts, he had about 90 thousand people at his disposal. Of course, some units and formations of the armies of the two fronts were able to break out of the encirclement later - the most successful in this regard were the actions of the troops of the Bryansk Front. But in any case, the losses of Soviet troops near Vyazma and Bryansk amounted to 700,000 people.[150] 5. Now, based on the —

published German documents and materials, we can say the following about the German plans. As early as October 30, the command of Army Group Center issued a directive to continue Operation No. 2250/41. It was based on the order to encircle Moscow by army group of October 14. In general terms, the tasks of the armies were assumed to be the following:

“3. The 2nd Panzer Army strikes between Ryazan and the Kashira region across the Oka. [...] Whether the bulk of the tank army will march east or west of the Moskva River during further battles will depend on the availability of crossings and on the situation after the [...]”

4. The 4th Army is preparing to immediately resume the offensive in the main direction south and north of the highway, while the weather allows the necessary maneuvers to be carried out by forces and the supply of ammunition to the front. Report objects to be attacked. The northern wing of the army to advance in the general direction of Klin. A further offensive by infantry formations, with the support of the 4th Panzer Group, in the direction of Yaroslavl, Rybinsk, should be envisaged in case the weather conditions and the supply situation

permit. 5. The 9th Army to find out the situation near Kalinin, north of Yaropolets, push the enemy back in the sector of the Lama River and

capture the crossings across the western end of the Volga reservoir. In the future, concentrate the 3rd tank group for an offensive south of the Volga reservoir in the direction to the northeast."[151] —

As we can see, in general, the plans of the German command were determined correctly, which makes the reproach for some stereotyped actions of the German command at this stage of the operation quite justified.

6. As it is easy to understand from the table, the number of German tanks was calculated from the average number of combat vehicles of an enemy tank division of 100 units, while motorized divisions were rightly considered to have no tanks. However, such an assessment from today's position seems overestimated. So, according to Thomas Jentz, on October 31 (if the first day of the month was the reporting day in the Red Army, then the last in the Wehrmacht) in the 1st Panzer Division of the xxxxi motorized corps there were only 36 combat-ready tanks, in the 10th Panzer Division - 87 machines. In the 6th Panzer Division on October 31, the following were considered combat-ready: 15 pz.kpfw.II, 34 pz.kpfw.35 (t), 10 pz.kpfw.IV and 7 command (armed only with machine guns) tanks. 19 Pz.Kpfw.II, 41 Pz.Kpfw.35(t) 13 Pz.Kpfw.IV and 3 command tanks were under repair. That is, "a hundred tanks" is the upper limit of the number, taking into account those vehicles that could be put into operation after a short-term repair.

At the same time, the state of the tank fleet of the German tank divisions was at the limit of the technical capabilities. For example, Pz.Kpfw.II tanks of the 6th Panzer Division have wound 11,500 km on their tracks since the beginning of the campaign, Pz.Kpfw.35 (t) tanks and even more - 12,500 km. Therefore, in addition to the hypothetical commissioning from repair, the reverse process was inevitable - failure for technical reasons. Not surprisingly, as a result of the impact of the Red Army's anti-tank weapons and technical malfunctions, by November 31, not a single combat-ready tank remained in the 6th Panzer Division.

It also seems interesting to consider the qualitative composition of the tank units and formations of the Red Army on the right wing of the Western Front before the last phase of the defensive battle for Moscow.

The composition of the tank units of the 30th and 16th armies on November 16, 1941^[152]

Армия	Бригады	Количество танков		Всего
		Т-34 и КВ	легкие (Т-26, БТ, Т-40, Т-60)	
30-я армия	58 тд	— ²	198	198
	107 мсд	2	11	13
	21 тбр	5	15	20
	8 тбр	—	23	23
16-я армия	1 гв. тбр	19	20	39
	27 тбр	11	10	21
	28 тбр	5	10	15
	23 тбр	11	20	31
	33 тбр	—	34	34
Всего		53	341	394

2 Apparently, 8 T-34 tanks sent to the 58th TD shortly before the German offensive (or when the division was transferred to the 30th Army on November 17-18) did not fall into the data of M. Kolomiets, of which 5 vehicles received took part in the battles and were shot down.

If we take the strength of the German Panzer Division on November 16 as 60-70 combat-ready tanks, then we can conclude that the ratio of forces in tanks was approximately 1:1. At the same time, it should be noted that German tanks were combined into more effective organizational structures, which made it possible to compensate for the performance characteristics by interacting with artillery and infantry. On the contrary, half of the Soviet tanks were concentrated in the 58th Panzer Division, which had no combat experience. As subsequent events showed, these tanks were quickly knocked out.

7. B. M. Shaposhnikov and his staff did not have complete data on the real impact of a preventive strike in the Volokolamsk direction and therefore limited themselves to general words about the difficulties with its organization. Let's try to analyze the impact of the strike of the 16th Army according to the diary of the commander of the Army Group "Center" Fyodor von Bock. One of the entries dated November 16, 1941

year says:

“I sent a request to the 4th Army, is everything ready for tomorrow's attack of the Gepner Panzer Group. I got an unexpected reply that they are not going to attack until the day after tomorrow! Only two regiments of the left wing of the V Corps will attack tomorrow, following the 9th Army. I asked Kluge^[153] to explain the inconsistency of this with his statements yesterday. He said: “there was an ambiguity because the enemy attacked the 7th and 20th Corps today.”^[154] —

The story continued on November 17:

“At about 18:00, he [the chief of staff of the GA Center, Major General Greifenberg, who was in Maloyaroslavets] reported that the attack of the Gepner group, including the VII Corps, planned for tomorrow, had not been canceled. But a quarter of an hour later, the head of the operations department of the 4th Army reported that only the V Corps and units of the XXXXVI Motorized Corps would attack tomorrow with limited targets, while the XXXX Motorized, IX and VII Corps would not attack until the 19th.^[155] —

Thus, the daring counter-offensive of the 16th Army threw into confusion the formations of the 4th Panzer Group, which were preparing for the offensive, and delayed their offensive. At the same time, it cannot be said that the enemy subsequently managed to easily break the resistance of the “weakened counterattack” of the 16th Army. On November 19, von Bock writes:

“The offensive on the right wing of the 4th Army has been cancelled; five corps on the left wing of the army joined the offensive and advanced, overcoming stubborn resistance...”^[156] —

8. According to the latest research conducted by the historian of mechanized formations of the Red Army E. Drig, the statistics of the losses of the 58th Panzer Division are as follows:

"1. Of the 8 T-34 tanks sent to PRB No. 102, 3 tanks that did not reach the division and were returned en route.

Of the 5 T-34 tanks of irretrievable losses, 3 were lost in the Volokolamsk direction in the Utishevo, Poseltsevo area on 11/18–19/41 and 2 in the Klin area on 11/23/41.

2. Of the 128 BT-7 tanks irretrievably lost in the area of Utishevo, Bludi, Povelitsevo, Bortniki, Khrushchevo - 36 pieces in the period 11/16–17/41. In the

area of Teryaev Sloboda, Shishkino, Golovkovo, Spass - 32 pieces in the period 11/18–21/41

In the area of Klin, Yamuga, Bolshoe Birevo, Spas-Zaulok - 37 units 11/21/41.

In the area of Rogachevo, Pokrovskoye, Voronino, Dorshevo - 23 units

11/23/25/41. 3. Of the 5 T-26 tanks irretrievable losses in the Spas area Torokhovo - 4 pieces 17–19.11.41

In the Klin area - 1 piece on 11/23/41.

4. Of the 15 KhT-26 irretrievable losses in the Khrushchevo, Teryaeva Sloboda, Spass, Bludi, Utishevo, Nudol - 13 units 11/17–18/41 In the Voronino, Yamuga area - 2 units 11/24/41 7 pieces 11/17–18/41

In the Klin area - 2 pieces on 11/23/41.

Thus, out of five irretrievably lost T-34s, three were lost in the Volokolamsk direction, and two were lost after being transferred to the 30th Army. Of the 128 BT-7 tanks, only 36 vehicles were lost during counterattacks near Volokolamsk, the rest fell on defensive battles on November 18–25, 1941. Of the 29 T-26 tanks (including their flamethrower modification OT-130) in the 16th Army, the 58th Panzer Division lost 24 vehicles, and in the 30th Army - 5 vehicles. In general, most of the formation's losses are in defensive battles as part of the 30th Army. **9.** The strength of these formations of the 16th Army on November 20, 1941 was characterized by

the following figures. It is clearly seen that the core of the 16th Army at that time was the 78th Rifle Division of Colonel A.P.

Beloborodov, who arrived at the beginning of the fighting in the Volokolamsk direction from Siberia. It was noticeably stronger than the other two formations, both in terms of the number of personnel and in terms of equipment with heavy weapons.

Дивизия	Всего людей	Винтовок	Станковых и ручных пулеметов	Орудий всех систем	Минометов всех калибров
8 гв. сд	4759	3871	42	23	12
18 сд	6944	4974	76	16	32
78 сд	9814	8459	266	103	94

Military Historical Archive No. 2 (26), 2002, p.75.

10. The retreat beyond the Istra reservoir gave rise to a serious conflict between G.K. Zhukov and K.K. Rokossovsky. Later Konstantin Konstantinovich wrote in his memoirs:

***“Enemy troops quickly concentrated in the Klin direction. The threat from the north grew stronger. The pressure on our left wing, where all our reserves were put to work, did not stop. All this forced us to think about measures that would improve the position of our troops and make it possible to slow down the advance of the enemy. By this time, fighting in the center and on the left wing was going on 10–12 kilometers west of the Istra reservoir. The reservoir itself, the Istra River and the surrounding area represented an excellent line, having taken it in advance, it was possible, in my opinion, to organize a solid defense, moreover, with small forces. Then we would withdraw a certain number of troops to the second echelon, thereby creating a depth of defense, and a significant part would be transferred to the Klin direction. Having thoroughly thought through everything and carefully discussed it with my assistants, I reported our plan to the commander of the front and asked him to allow us to withdraw the troops to the Istra line, without waiting for the enemy to force the defenders back there and force the river and the reservoir on their shoulders. To all that has been said above, in favor of such a decision, it must be added that the army troops suffered heavy losses in both men and equipment. I'm not talking about the mortal fatigue of all who remained in the ranks. The leaders themselves literally fell off their feet. Sometimes I managed to sleep briefly in the car when moving from one site to another. The front commander did not take into account my request and ordered me to stand to the death without moving a single step.*”**

death is the only option. It is certainly justified if this achieves an important goal - salvation from the death of the majority, or if the prerequisites are created for changing the difficult situation and ensuring a common success, in the name of which those who must give their lives with the selflessness of a soldier will perish. But in this case, there were no troops behind the 16th Army, and if the defending units had died, the path to Moscow would have been opened, which the enemy was trying to achieve all the time. I considered the question of withdrawing to the Istra line extremely important.

My duty as a commander and a communist did not allow me to resignedly agree with the decision of the front commander, and I turned to the chief of the General Staff, Marshal BM Shaposhnikov. In a telegram to him, we explained our proposal in detail. A few hours later we received a response. It said that our proposal was correct and that he, as chief of the General Staff, would sanction it. Knowing Boris Mikhailovich back in the service in peacetime, I was sure that this answer was unconditionally agreed with the Supreme Commander-in-Chief. In any case, he knows him. We immediately prepared an order for the troops to withdraw the main forces at night to the line of the Istra reservoir. Reinforced detachments were left in their former positions, which had to retreat only under pressure from the enemy. The order was sent out to the liaison officers. Our mood lifted. Now, we thought, the Germans would break their teeth on the Istra line. Their main strength is that tanks will run into an insurmountable barrier, and motorized formations will not be able to use their mobility. The joy, however, was short-lived. Before all our troops had time to receive an order to withdraw, a short but formidable telegram from Zhukov followed. I'll quote it verbatim:

"I command the troops of the front! I cancel the order to withdraw troops behind the Istra Reservoir, I order you to defend on the occupied line and not step back. Army General Zhukov. What

can you do - an order is an order, and we, like soldiers, obeyed. As a result, there were troubles. as we and

foreseen, the enemy, continuing to push our units on the left wing, threw them back to the east, crossed Istra on the move and captured bridgeheads on its eastern bank. To the south of the Volga reservoir, he broke through the defenses in the sector of the 30th Army and began to quickly advance with tank and motorized formations, expanding the breakthrough. His troops went to the flank and rear of the 126th Infantry Division, which was defending on our right flank, and even before that it was greatly weakened and barely held back the pressing enemy. At the same time, a blow was struck from the Teryaeva Sloboda area, and German tanks with infantry moved towards Solnechnogorsk, bypassing t

11. On the question of the exact time of the stop of the German offensive, it is necessary to dwell in somewhat more detail. Of course, we were not talking about a momentary stop of progress on the order from above and the rollback that followed immediately after this. There was a gradual process of transition from offensive to defensive, followed by a stop at the threshold of the Soviet capital, a retreat to the west.

As of December 5, 1941, there was still no consensus on the need to suspend offensive operations in different echelons of command of the German troops north-west of Moscow. On that day, von Bock wrote in his diary:

“The 3rd Panzer Group reports that its offensive power has been exhausted, and it is only possible to hold its positions if the 23rd Infantry Division remains subordinate [3rd TGr]. [158] I — discussed with Kluge that the offensive of the 4th Panzer Group, planned for tomorrow, should develop; he replied that this should not happen. The 3rd Panzer Group was ordered to go on the defensive. The 23rd Infantry Division remains under its command. Moreover, she and the 4th Army were ordered to prepare to withdraw to the common line of the river. Nara Moscow - Karimskoe - Istra reservoir - Lake Senezhskoe - east of Klin. Withdrawal will be made when the appropriate order is given.”[159]

12. As in previous cases, the authors of the study proceeded from overestimations when determining the number of German tank

connections. In this case, they counted 290 tanks in two panzer divisions. Even if we assume that part of this figure is the Sturmgeschütz self-propelled guns, such an estimate seems to be greatly overestimated. The 19th and 20th Panzer Divisions operated in the center, which by August were badly battered during the battle of Smolensk and numbered less than a hundred tanks. Therefore, already in October 1941, they were torn apart and used as infantry support tanks. In the same role as direct infantry support tanks, they were later used near Naro Fominsk. Therefore, the data given in the work should be interpreted as follows: in the troops of the 4th German army, opposing the 5th, 33rd and 43rd armies, there were fewer tanks, but there were no tank formations suitable for independent use.

13. The breakthrough near Naro-Fominsk was an attempt by the Germans to prevent the movement of troops between the armies defending in the center of the Western Front and the 16th and 30th armies, reflecting the main attack of the 3rd and 4th tank groups on the right flank of the front. Initially, it was assumed that the corps located in the center of the formation of the 4th Army would go on the offensive in the event of a successful and rapid advance of the 3rd and 4th Panzer Groups. However, this did not happen, and only Geyer's IX Corps, adjoining its left flank to the advancing 4th Panzer Group, came into motion. On November 27, 1941, von Bock wrote in his diary:

“In the evening I spoke with Kluge, who believes that the time has come for the offensive of the XX Corps and wants to assign it to the 29th. I am not sure that this is correct, and I suggested that he think it over again .”[160]

The next day, by mutual agreement, von Bock and Kluge again postponed the advance of the XX Corps. Finally, on the evening of November 29, it was decided to launch an offensive on December 1 with the XX and LVII motorized corps. The main blow was to be delivered by the forces of the XX Corps of General of the Infantry Matern. For the offensive in the Naro-Fominsk direction, the 3rd motorized, 258th, 292nd and part of the 183rd infantry division were allocated. The 258th Infantry Division was assigned a tank battalion of the 19th Panzer Division and the 191st Batta

assault guns as a means of close support

infantry.

14. German casualty figures do not support these figures. The casualties of the 258th Infantry Division were 170 killed, 577 wounded and 148 missing. [161] The Germans also announced the destruction of eight T-34 tanks, one KV and two "10-ton tanks". T-60s or, less likely, Valentines could be interpreted as a 10-ton tank. M. P. Safir's group lost one tank irrevocably and three - lined, but soon restored. The irretrievable losses of the 191st battalion of assault guns amounted to seven self-propelled guns "Sturmgeschuts". According to von Bock's diary, the order to withdraw was given by the commander of the 4th Army, Kluge, at 16:00 (Berlin time) on December 3, 1941, after the crisis that arose as a result of Soviet counterattacks.

15. Here we see, in a clearly formulated form, the method of holding the "fortress" by pressure from outside, typical of the Red Army. Not only the defense of the city of Tula in 1941, but also the defense of Leningrad was based on this principle for most of the period of the blockade. The tasks of the Volkhov Front in 1942 were to influence the troops of Army Group North on the outer front of the defense of Leningrad. This diverted significant forces that could have been used to storm the city. The defense of Stalingrad was built according to a similar scheme, when the actions of the Don Front, which put pressure on the 6th Army of F. Paulus from the north, had a huge impact on the fate of the battle. The Don Front, unlike the defenders of Stalingrad, had a stable supply and could exert pressure from outside on the German troops storming the Volga stronghold.

16. Under "relocation to other airfields" in this case, one should understand the redeployment of part of the forces of the German Air Force to the Mediterranean theater of operations. Confident that the Eastern campaign had been won, on October 29 Hitler promised Mussolini to send additional aviation forces to the Mediterranean. On November 11, the commander of the 2nd Air Fleet, Field Marshal A. Kesselring, informed the command of Army Group Center that he

together with headquarters and II Air Corps must depart for Italy no later than a week later. To support operations in the Moscow direction, the 8th Air Corps of Wolfram von Richthofen remained. That is why it was decided to launch the offensive no later than November 15–16 in order to have time to take advantage of the support of air groups departing in the Mediterranean. II Air Corps of General B. Lerzer formally departed from the eastern front on 20 November. The German historian K. Becker, commenting on the transfer of the II Air Corps to Italy, noted that in fact only the headquarters of the corps left the Eastern Front. All air groups subordinate to him (skg210, kg3, kg53, jg51 and stg77) remained in Russia. Moreover, the stg77 dive squadron was soon activated near Rostov. However, the need to form the II Air Corps again forced the transfer of aircraft reserves from Germany there, which left the air connection near Moscow without replenishment. By the beginning of the November offensive in Moscow (seven directions of bomber air groups, three - assault and dive bombers, five - single-engine fighters, one - twin-engine fighters) with a total number of 580 aircraft. This was significantly less than 1320 combat vehicles, which were part of the 2nd Air Fleet on September 30, 1941. All this led to a noticeable decrease in the activity of the German Air Force in the Moscow direction.

17. The offensives of the Soviet troops near Tikhvin and Rostov were a kind of rehearsal for the counter-offensive near Moscow. In the same way, due to the introduction of reserves from freshly formed formations into battle, strikes were prepared and delivered on the stretched flanks of the German strike groups, which led to their forced retreat. Near Tikhvin, a counterattack was launched on the flanks of the German shock wedge, which stretched out in the direction of the river. Svir, where it was supposed to connect with the Finnish troops. The offensive of the Soviet troops began on November 12 (52nd Army of N.K. Klykov) and 19 (4th Army of K.A. Meretskov) November 1941. The pressure on the flanks forced the Germans to begin the withdrawal of troops, and by the end of December they were driven back to the line of the Volkhov River, from which their offensive began on October 16th. Near Rostov, the shock wedge of the 1st Panzer Army of E. von Kleist, which stretched out towards Rostov, fell under a flank attack. Southern counteroffensive

front began on November 17, and by December 2, German motorized formations were driven back from Rostov.

18. The figure of 900 tanks is not supported by the latest data. So, according to the German historian Werner Haupt, out of 248 tanks that were combat-ready on October 16, in the 2nd Panzer Army, by November 23, only 38 units remained. Of the 259 combat vehicles combat-ready on October 16 in the 3rd Panzer Group, by November 23, 77 units remained. In the 6th Panzer Division on November 31, 1941, there was not even one combat-ready pz.kpfw.35 (t) and pz.kpfw.iv.

19. The desire of the Soviet command to capture Teryaeva Sloboda was so great that an attempt was made to land an airborne assault. For the landing operation, 14 TB-3 aircraft of the 23rd air division were allocated. The order to land came at the end of the night of 14 December. However, due to organizational troubles, instead of two flights with the transfer of 300 people by air, each aircraft made only one sortie. Of the 14 TB-3s, two did not return, and three made emergency landings. A total of 147 people were landed, led by Captain I. G. Starchak. Forty paratroopers landed on a village occupied by the Germans and died in an unequal battle. Due to the small number of Starchak's detachment, he was unable to occupy and hold the route passing through Teryaeva Sloboda, and was mainly engaged in sabotage actions. At the same time, air strikes were launched along the Klin-Volokolamsk road going through Teryaeva Sloboda. They involved not only the bombers of the 23rd Air Division, but also the fighters of the 6th Air Defense Fighter Corps of Moscow, which only on December 14 carried out 531 sorties, including 146 with rockets.

20. The battle for Klin from the German point of view developed as follows. The road passing through the city of Klin became the only escape route for the xxxxi and xxxxvi motorized corps of the 3rd Panzer Group Reinhardt. The northeastern flank of the German strike force aimed at Moscow was covered by the 36th and 14th motorized divisions stretched along the front. It was

a typical solution for the Germans with the advancement of tank divisions at the point of impact, and motorized divisions to cover the flank. However, the defensive capabilities of the divisions, which included only two motorized infantry regiments (there were three infantry regiments in ordinary infantry divisions), were more than moderate. The 36th and 14th motorized divisions were no exception. Their defenses were overwhelmed by the advance of the 30th Army formations, and only the introduction of the 1st Panzer Division into battle made it possible to avoid an immediate catastrophe.

The 1st Panzer Division was an elite formation, it was the only one at the beginning of the war that had a battalion fully equipped with half-track armored personnel carriers. By November 30, the division still retained 37 tanks. Under the cover of the 1st Panzer Division, units and formations of two German motorized corps broke through to the west through Klin. At the same time, the work done under the leadership of B. M. Shaposhnikov underestimated the real successes of the Soviet troops in intercepting the road from Klin to the west. The Germans recognized

***“During the many days of heavy fighting that preceded the entry of the division into Klin, the road to Nekrasino was cut several times by the enemy. At the same time, on the road, other German units lost a lot of equipment as a result of collisions with the enemy and accidents. The debris piled up along the entire road, leaving only a narrow passage between them.*”**

The 1st Panzer Division, which was the last to withdraw from Klin, was surrounded and forced to fight its way to the west. The breakthrough was successful due to a deceptive maneuver. First, a breakthrough to the northeast, to Golyady, was simulated, forcing the Soviet troops blocking the division to send large forces to parry this attack and weaken other directions. This made it possible to shift the artillery fire and move the tanks to the main direction (to Nekrasino) and break through the encirclement.

21. It is impossible not to note the reasonable use of cavalry by the command of the Western Front. The corps of L. M. Dovator in the defensive phase of the battle for Moscow acted as part of the 16th

army. In December, the army of K.K. Rokossovsky advanced against the dense formation of German troops. Under these conditions, a reasonable decision was made to use the 2nd Guards. Cavalry Corps in a new direction, with the expectation of finding gaps between the formations of the 4th German Army. But even successful actions did not guarantee against fatal accidents. On December 16, the cavalymen reached the Dyadkovskaya crossing. Here, on the ice of the Ruza River opposite the village of Palashkino, L. M. Dovator was mortally wounded. In the future, the 2nd Guards. the cavalry corps became a regular participant in heavy positional fighting on the Western Front in 1942–1943.

22. These three cavalry divisions (41st, 57th and 75th) belonged to the so-called "light cavalry divisions" of 3 thousand people each, formed in the autumn of 1941. Organizationally, they were similar to mountain cavalry divisions. Each of the light cavalry divisions consisted of three cavalry regiments, an artillery battalion and support units. Sometimes these formations are mistakenly considered to have no artillery at all, but this is an exaggeration. The regimental artillery of each cavalry regiment consisted of four 76-mm regimental guns mod. 1927, two 45 mm anti-tank guns and four 82 mm mortars. In addition, each statewide regiment had an anti-tank platoon with seven anti-tank rifles. The artillery battalion consisted of three batteries, each of which included four 76-mm regimental guns, four 76-mm divisional guns and four 82-mm

mortar.

23. From the point of view of the German command, the battles in the Tula direction were characterized by the loss of a stable elbow connection between the 4th and 2nd tank armies. Von Bock wrote in his diary on 15 December 1941:

Difficult negotiations with Guderian on a break west of Tula. He rejected all proposals to close the gap from the south. I handed over to him the remaining elements of the 137th Infantry Division from the 4th Army and stressed the need to send something, no matter how weak, on skis or by any other method to Odoevo.[162]

Guderian himself described the same events as follows:

“On December 14, I arrived in Roslavl, where I met with the commander-in-chief of the ground forces, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch. Field Marshal von Kluge was also present. In order to get to Roslavl, I had to drive for 22 hours in a snow blizzard. I described in detail to the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces the situation of my troops and asked him to allow my army to withdraw to the line of the river. Zush and Oka, where during the October battles our forward line was located, which, as a result, was to some extent equipped. The Commander-in-Chief gave me his consent to this. The question was also raised about how it would be possible to close the 40-kilometer gap formed between the 24th tank and 43rd army corps. For this purpose, the 4th Army was to transfer the 137th Infantry Division to the 2nd Tank Army. However, Field Marshal von Kluge has so far sent only four battalions of this division under the command of the division commander. I considered this completely insufficient and asked that the remaining half of the division would also be immediately placed at my disposal. During the battles of this division for the elimination of the gap, the brave General Bergman died. The resulting dangerous gap between the corps was never closed.”[163]

Three days later, on December 18, when the commander of the Army Group Kluge was handed over, von Bock, dismissed by Hitler, spoke in favor of transferring responsibility for breaking the front to the 4th Army. As a result, the gap was indeed closed due to the regrouping of resources within the 4th Army. For this purpose, on December 27, 1941, the so-called "Stumme group" was created. The headquarters of the XXXX motorized corps, transferred from the 4th Panzer Group, became the group's headquarters. The core of the group was to be the fresh 216th Infantry Division, transferred from the west. In addition to it, the group included the 10th and 19th tank divisions and the 10th motorized division. With the help of the Stumme group, the German command hoped to close the gap between the adjacent flanks of the 4th and 2nd tan

airlifted by the transport aviation of the 4th SS Regiment.

24. The advantage of the Luftwaffe in the air in the initial period of the Soviet counteroffensive was indeed lost. In the early days of the Soviet offensive, one loss of our aviation accounted for 150-180 sorties, which is almost a record figure typical for calm sectors of the front with a weak air enemy - for example, the 7th Army in Karelia. However, in the second half of December, the forces of the enemy Air Force in the Moscow direction began to increase. The Fuhrer's order of December 18 stated:

“a) the Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, immediately allocate the following reinforcement to the VIII Air Corps: three bomber groups from among the new formations; one bomber group (replenished from the Western Front); one air group of heavy fighters from units of night fighters (to replenish two air groups of heavy fighters of the VIII Air Corps); one transport air group from the 4th Air Fleet [i.e. e. from the southern sector of the Soviet-German front - A. I.]; four transport groups from among the new formations; b) The transport air group, transferred from the 4th Air Fleet, to transfer 1 reserve battalion from Army Group South to Army Group Center (the order has already been given). Two transport groups from 18.12 to deliver units of the 4th regiment of the SS troops to the Army Group Center. The remaining 3 transport groups will deliver from Germany to the Army Group Center of individual reserve battalions.[164]

In total, about 120 aircraft were to be received to reinforce the VIII Air Corps near Moscow. If on December 12, 1941, there were 16 $\frac{1}{3}$ air groups in its composition, then on December 22, Wolfram von Richthoffen had 19 $\frac{2}{3}$ air groups at ***his disposal***. Moreover, those who arrived to replenish the air group were much stronger

who were at the front at the time. So, the air group of the 4th bomber squadron (KG4) relocated from East Prussia consisted of 29 He.111 bombers (19 combat-ready), and the air group of the 100th squadron (KG100, formerly KG26) located at the Sescha II airfield could put up for combat sorties no more than 6-7 cars.

Transfer to the east of the twin-engine Me.110 from the Reich air defense was supposed to compensate for the organic drawback of the single-engine Me.109 - the narrow gauge of the chassis made it difficult to take off and land from poorly prepared airfields, which led to numerous accidents. At the Me.110, the main landing gear retracted into the engine nacelles and the chassis track was much wider than that of the Me.109. But the most important replenishment was transport aircraft, the number of which at the disposal of the command of the GA "Center" reached 400 aircraft. Soon they were involved in large-scale operations to supply blockaded units and formations, as well as to maneuver troops in the air.

25. The statement about the withdrawal of German aviation to the rear and saving it from defeat in such a peculiar way is not confirmed by the data available today. Firstly, just at that time there was a transfer of aircraft from the West (see previous comment). Secondly, it was the pressure of Soviet aviation on German airfields that forced them to leave their homes. In particular, on December 14, 1941, the Air Force of the Western Front attacked the Vatulino airfield southwest of Ruza. According to Soviet data, 13 aircraft, mostly fighters, were destroyed at the airfield. There is no confirmation of this figure in German sources, but the group of the 52nd fighter squadron (Jg52) based on Vatulino I had to leave this well-equipped airfield, leaving a lot of valuable equipment on it.

26. Ski battalions were to some extent a product of the war with Finland in 1939/40. The Finns actively used separate battalions of skiers for coverage, detours and sabotage. Based on the experience of the first period of the Winter War, ski battalions of the Red Army began to form. Thus, to the battle for Moscow

in the Red Army, some experience in the combat use of ski units had already been accumulated.

At the beginning of the winter of 1941/42, ski battalions with a staff strength of 578 began to form (at the beginning of 1942 it was reduced to 556 people). Organizationally, the battalion consisted of a headquarters, three ski companies of 126 people each, and a mortar battalion of 130 people. The mortar battalion was armed with nine 50mm and six 82mm mortars. In December 1941, 84 ski battalions were formed, in January 1942 - another 77. The offensive capabilities of the ski battalions, due to the lack of heavy weapons, were small, although they could be used to move deep into the enemy's defense off-road - which was possible only in conditions of a thinned front. In general, it can be stated that the successful use of ski battalions by the Finns was due to

the specific conditions of the theater of operations and insufficiently effective opposition from the Red Army. In the Moscow direction, the skiers had to act against a strong enemy, who skillfully used his advantage in heavy weapons - primarily in artillery. In addition, the dense network of settlements in the Moscow region made it difficult for skiers to break through behind enemy lines. All this often forced formation commanders to pull apart ski battalions to replenish rifle divisions. Much more effective was the use of ski battalions on the North-Western and Volkhov fronts, where the terrain conditions were more favorable for the use of light infantry on skis.

27. The orders were indeed tough and unambiguous.

So in the directive of the OKH to the command of the GA "Center" it was indicated:

"1. The Führer

ordered: Large-scale retreat is unacceptable. It can lead to the complete loss of heavy weapons and equipment. By personal example, commanders, commanders and officers must induce troops to fanatical resistance in their positions, even if the enemy has broken through from the flanks and from the rear. Only by such conduct of the battle can one win the time that is necessary for

the transfer of reinforcements from Germany and from the West. Only after the reserves arrive at the rear cut-off positions, it will be possible to retreat to these positions.”[165]

In a telegram dated December 21 to the commands of the subordinate armies, these theses were explained and strengthened with references to historical examples:

“The Führer in his speech on December 20 said the following: 1) The fanatical will to defend the territory on which the troops are stationed must be instilled in every soldier by all, even the most cruel means. If any part is equally imbued with such a will, then all enemy attacks, even if they led to penetrations or breakthroughs in the front line in some areas, will ultimately be doomed to failure. Every officer and every soldier must realize that during the retreat the troops will be exposed to the dangers of the Russian winter to a greater extent than in positions, even if they are not properly equipped, not to mention significant and inevitable material losses during any retreat. The Russians will immediately advance after the retreating unit and will constantly attack it, not giving them the opportunity to stop, since the rear positions are not prepared. The story of Napoleon's retreat threatens to repeat itself. Therefore, withdrawal is possible only from those sectors where rear positions have been prepared. Only if a soldier sees that, breaking away from the enemy, he will take up a position, even if hastily equipped, will he understand this withdrawal. Only then will trust between the troops and the command not be undermined. If the troops retreat from the position in which they have already settled down and do not receive an appropriate replacement in the new place, then as a result of such a retreat, a crisis

Memories of the catastrophe of Napoleon's army were a strong incentive for stubborn resistance. The example of 1812 showed that even an unconditionally strong and well-prepared army could fail. It must be said that Hitler had far more opportunities to fend off the effect of large spaces and a harsh climate than Napoleon Bonaparte and Charles XII. The army of an industrialized country of the 20th century could use rail, road transport and airlift tons of cargo and hundreds of people with weapons and ammunition.

28. Strange as it may seem, for the most part, formations that are not even

were brought to the west for reformation. Apparently, the testimony of prisoners and intelligence data only selectively reflected the state of enemy formations. After the end of the fighting near Moscow, the 6th and 7th tank divisions were withdrawn to the west for reorganization, returning to the front in the winter of 1942-1943. At the same time, the 7th Panzer Division is rated quite highly in work, and the 5th Panzer Division that remained at the front (and actively participated in the battles for Rzhev in 1942) is recorded as incapable of combat. The 11th Panzer Division also did not withdraw from the front and, after replenishment, participated in Operation Blau in the summer of 1942. Perhaps, one can unequivocally agree only with the low assessment of the 10th Panzer Division, which lost its transport and was withdrawn to the west in March 1942 (it was sent to Africa in the autumn of 1942).

29. Thus, on the whole, Soviet staff analysts correctly identified the grouping of reserves that took part in the January battles. As early as December 18, the command of Army Group Center was informed that:

“The Army Group will be delivered:

216 infantry divisions - presumably before 1.1.1942 to

Vitebsk, 208 infantry divisions - presumably before 8.1.1942

to Vitebsk, 246 infantry divisions - presumably before

16.1.1942 to Vitebsk, 211 infantry divisions - presumably

before January 24, 1942 to Vitebsk, 205 infantry division - presumably until February 1,

These were divisions of a pre-war formation, located in the summer and autumn of 1941 in the west. Their anti-tank divisions and anti-tank companies of infantry regiments were armed with 37-mm anti-tank guns (that is, they did not have effective means of combating the T-34 and KV), most of the divisions were equipped with French vehicles - captured or received from factories after the occupation of France. However, the inclusion of the 35th and 213th Infantry Divisions in the reserves is a mistake. The first operated on the Eastern Front from the very beginning of the campaign, and the 213th Infantry Division was actually a security division. Security divisions had only one infantry regiment instead of three and an artillery battalion instead of an artillery regiment.

Accordingly, the 213th security division was in the East from June 1941, but performed the functions of protecting the rear, appearing in the first line only during the Soviet offensive in the winter of 1941/42. Another formation mentioned here - the 63rd Infantry Division - did not exist at that time, that is, there was no division with this number in the Wehrmacht in 1941 and 1942. Most likely, we are talking about the 83rd Infantry Division, which appeared on the Eastern Front in February 1942

of the year.

30. With regard to infantry divisions, the same picture is observed as in the description of the state of tank formations. In the same way, divisions that actually remained in the East and continued combat operations in the summer of 1942 are indicated as non-combat-ready divisions. In fact, at the end of the winter campaign of 1941/42, five infantry divisions that had lost their combat capability were withdrawn to the West: the 15th, 17th, 23rd, 106th and 167th - although of these only the 106th and 167th infantry divisions are marked in the book as having low combat capability. The remaining three are listed in combat-ready formations - just like the SS motorized division "Reich", which in fact suffered heavy losses and was withdrawn from the front to be reorganized in Germany. The Reich returned to the front in the form of an SS Panzergrenadier Division (that is, with a tank regiment) in January 1943. Also, after the fighting near Moscow, the 900th training brigade was returned to Germany and disbanded.

31. The defense system of the German troops in the winter of 1941/42 subsequently received the code name "pearl necklace": "pearls" of strongholds were strung on the "thread" of the front line. In the conditions of a dense network of settlements in the Moscow region, villages and small towns often became the basis of strongholds. The gaps between the strongholds were shot through by artillery and machine-gun fire. The most durable houses of each settlement turned into strongholds, in their basements positions for machine guns were equipped with loopholes cutting through the walls of the building. To increase the resistance of firing points to artillery fire, earth was poured onto the floor of the building and logs were laid. Remaining

unequipped buildings, especially those found in the sector of shelling of bunkers, were dismantled or burned. Each strong point was prepared for all-round defense. Sometimes even the positions of light guns were equipped in the buildings. The positions of the "Königsberg Line", which the troops of the Western Front encountered in late December 1941 and early January 1942, were also characterized by trenches and gun emplacements made of snow. This was due to the difficulties of equipping trenches in the ground frozen to a depth of more than a meter.

Subsequently, due to the increase in the firepower of the Red Army, such a system of strong points was recognized by the German command as obsolete and was not recommended for use.

32. Without knowing it, the troops of the 33rd Army of M. G. Efremov put a bullet in the career of one of the famous German military leaders. On December 30, 1941, a strike group of five rifle divisions of the 33rd and 43rd armies broke through the defenses in the zone of the 15th infantry division and forced it to withdraw. To Hitler's order that the 15th Infantry Division was obliged to hold its positions, the commander of the Army Group Center, Kluge, objected: "The state of the 15th Division is such that you can order anything to it, but it no longer has the strength." On January 3, 1942, the 33rd Army liberated Borovsk. To eliminate the breakthrough, the commander of Army Group Center transferred the xx army corps to the 4th Panzer Army, since the 4th Army was no longer able to eliminate the breakthrough. Having broken through the front, the 33rd Army turned north, in the direction of Vereya. On January 8, the army troops advancing on Vereya cut the communications of the xx army corps and created a threat to its encirclement. The only way out of the current situation was in the immediate withdrawal of the corps formations. Without waiting for confirmation from the high command, the commander of the 4th Panzer Army, Colonel General Erich Hoepner, ordered the withdrawal of the corps. This decision instantly cost him his position. Hitler ordered "Gepner's expulsion from the army with all the ensuing consequences."

Hoepner subsequently took part in a conspiracy against Hitler in 1944 and was hanged on August 8, 1944. The new commander of the 4th

General of the Infantry Richard Ruof, who had previously been commander of the V Army Corps, became the tank army instead of the displaced Hoepner. Thus, by the beginning of January 1941, of those commanders who led four tank groups at the beginning of the war with the USSR, only the commander of the 1st Tank Army, Ewald von Kleist, retained his post.

33. Here, with just a few phrases, B. M. Shaposhnikov and his employees ruin the legend that appeared in the 1960s about the “stop order” of G. K. Zhukov, who wrested Yuhnov’s capture from the hands of P. A. Belov’s corps. On January 3, 1942, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps received an order to turn from Yuhnov to Mosalsk. In his memoirs, P. A. Belov writes the following:

“The order surprised me with its inconsistency. Firstly, my decision to turn the main forces of the corps against the Shchelkanov flat (that is, Yuhnov) enemy grouping corresponded to the directive received the day before: it demanded destroy the Yuhnov group of Nazis at the first stage. Secondly, the reproach that we allegedly withdraw our main forces from Mosalsk caused bewilderment. What does Mosalsk have to do with it? We did not lead and did not intend to attack this city with the main forces, and no one ordered us to do so. Against the Mosal grouping of the Nazis, the 239th and 325th rifle divisions were allocated, transferred to my subordination from the 10th Army. In addition, the enemy in Mosalsk was not at that time strong enough to make it necessary to turn cavalry formations on the city. [...] We made several more attempts to convince the Military Council of the front that it would be much more expedient to act in the manner prescribed by its directive of January 2. We had an excellent opportunity to bypass Yuhnov on the left, to bring in at least four cavalry divisions through gaps in the enemy's battle formations near the village of Kasimovka and in other places. Having cut the Warsaw highway and turned to Medyn, these divisions would begin to smash the rear and headquarters of the German troops.[167]

The work presented to the reader's attention quite unambiguously answers the question of the "inconsistency" of the order: Belov's corps failed to achieve significant results in the capture of Yukhnov, and he went on the defensive. If we turn to the operational reports of the General Staff of the Red Army, we will see the same picture. The operational summary at 8:00 on January 2 says: "Belov's task force fought for the capture of the city of Yukhnov." The next day, January 3, 1942, the position of Belov's cavalry corps is characterized as follows: "Belov's task force fought stubborn battles with large enemy forces."

At the same time, the thesis of P. A. Belov that he could take Yukhnov with another roundabout maneuver seems unconvincing. The shift in the direction of the strike meant stretching the front, thinning the battle formations, which was dangerous in a fight with an active and determined enemy. Already on January 3, 1942, not all formations of the corps were on the offensive, the operational summary of the General Staff for that day reads: "2 Guards. cd, repelling enemy attacks, fought at the line of Lyubimovo - Zhiletovo. Belov's group reached Yukhnov by the end of the day on December 30 and the following days, until the order to turn to Mosalsk, fought unsuccessful battles on the outskirts of the city. It is quite logical that in order to maintain the pace of the operation, G.K. Zhukov deployed the cavalry corps to a new direction, hoping to capture Yukhnov with the forces of the 50th army of I.V. Boldin approaching from the east.

To give weight to his words, P. A. Belov quoted the German General Blumentritt in his memoirs:

"Something like a miracle happened on the southern flank of the 4th Army. We did not understand why the Russians, despite their advantage in this sector of the front, did not cut the Yukhnov-Maloyaroslavets road and did not deprive the 4th Army of its only supply route. At night, Belov's cavalry corps, which caused us so much trouble in the second half of December, advanced in our rear towards Yukhnov. This corps reached the communications vital to us, but, fortunately, did not cut it. He continued to move in a westerly direction and disappeared somewhere in the huge Bogoroditsky swamps.

In fact, no miracle happened: having recovered from the shock of early December 1941, the German command took a number of decisive measures to restore the integrity of the front. Blumentritt's statement is nothing more than a fictionalization of the already dramatic events of the winter of 1941/42. The 40-kilometer gap that appeared as a result of the Tula operation between the 4th and 2nd tank armies was sealed by the Stumme group and the transfer of troops by transport aviation.

34. In the zone of the Kalinin Front in January 1942, a battle unfolded, which largely determined the fate of the counteroffensive near Moscow. The concentration of large transport aviation forces in the Moscow direction began to give a quite visible effect. As a result of the offensive of the Kalinin and North-Western Fronts, the XIII Army Corps was surrounded in the Olenino region. Thanks to the organization of air supply, he avoided defeat, and at the end of January 1942 he was released by the strike of the 9th Army of Walter Model. At the same time, Model's counterattack led to the interruption of the main communications of the 39th and 29th armies of the Kalinin Front. Subsequently, the 29th Army was cut off from the 39th and destroyed in the Monchalovsky forests. The defeat of the 39th Army, for various reasons, was postponed for six months and took place in July 1942.

35. The offensive of the 20th Army on the Lama River was the first example of the so-called "artillery offensive" and entered the textbooks in the post-war years. Heavy losses in the Battle of the Border forced the Soviet leadership to ease the staffing of rifle divisions: in July 1941, 152-mm howitzers were withdrawn from them and the number of 122-mm howitzers was reduced from 32 to 8 units. All 152-mm guns coming from industry and a significant part of 122-mm guns were used by artillery regiments subordinate to armies and fronts. This made it possible to concentrate artillery in the direction of the main attack, which was first done in the offensive on the Lama River. This practice was enshrined in a directive letter from the Headquarters of the Supreme Command of January 10, 1942, which read:

"In order to make artillery support effective, and the infantry offensive effective, it is necessary from practice

artillery training go to the practice of artillery offensive.

What does this

mean? This means, firstly, that artillery cannot be limited to one-time actions for an hour or two hours before the offensive, but must advance together with the infantry, must fire at small breaks throughout the entire offensive, until the enemy's defensive line is broken for the entire its depth.

This means, secondly, that the infantry should not advance after the cessation of artillery fire, as is the case with the so-called "artillery preparation", but together with the offensive by artillery, to the thunder of artillery fire, to the sounds of artillery music.

This means, thirdly, that artillery should not act randomly, but concentrated, and it should be concentrated not in any place of the front, but in the area of \u200b\u200baction of the shock group of the army, the front, and only in this area, because without this condition, artillery offensive.

Any of our army, no matter how poor in artillery, could concentrate 60-80 guns in the area of operation of its strike group, using an army artillery regiment for this purpose and taking from its divisions, say, two batteries of divisional artillery and a dozen or two three 120mm mortars. An artillery group thus formed would be quite sufficient to break into the enemy defenses and thus provide invaluable artillery support to the army strike group. If our armies do not do this, it is because they underestimate the great importance of massive artillery fire for infantry advances.

Any of our fronts, no matter how poor in artillery, could in the same way concentrate 150-200 guns in the area of operations of the front strike group, using its front-line artillery reserve for this purpose and taking from a number of our armies their army artillery regiments and at least one third of their divisional artillery. An artillery group formed in this way would be quite sufficient to crack the defenses.

enemy in the front. If our fronts do not do this, it is because they underestimate the great importance of massed artillery fire for an infantry offensive.”[168]

Subsequently, the practice of concentrating artillery with the remaining “lightweight” artillery armament of rifle divisions made it possible in 1943-1945. to concentrate on the direction of the main blow the all-destroying power of 300-400 guns per kilometer of the front.

36. Interestingly, following the results of the offensive, the commander of the 20th Army, A. A. Vlasov, was given the following description by the commander of the Western Front, G. K. Zhukov:

“Lieutenant General Vlasov has been in command of the troops of the 20th Army since November 20, 1941. He supervised the operations of the 20th Army: a counterattack on the city of Solnechnogorsk, the offensive of the army troops in the Volokolamsk direction and a breakthrough of the defensive line on the Lama River. All the tasks assigned to the troops of the army, comrade. Vlasov are carried out in good faith. Personally, Lieutenant General Vlasov is operationally well prepared and has organizational skills. With the management of the army - copes quite well. The position of the commander of the army is quite consistent.

37. To be precise, the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps managed to infiltrate the Warsaw highway. During January 13–16, Belov's group tried to cross the highway and advance towards Vyazma, but to no avail. At night, the highway was continuously illuminated by rockets, and the enemy responded to any advance towards it with counterattacks, sometimes supported by tanks (of the 19th Panzer Division of the Stumme Group). On January 17 and 18, fighting for the heights south

of the highway continued, settlements near the highway changed hands. The command of the group tried to change tactics, advancing now in the daytime, then at night, then on one sector of the front of the corps, then on the other. All these attempts to break through the highway ended in failure. A dense network of settlements that have fire links with each other cannot be

was to bypass. Breakthroughs of skiers or cavalymen were immediately localized by enemy counterattacks. As a result, for a breakthrough through the Varshavskoye Highway, a section of terrain was chosen where a dense forest closely adjoined the highway, which made it possible to accumulate large masses of infantry and cavalry in it, hidden from the enemy. The starting position for breaking through the connection of the group of P. A. Belov was taken on January 23. During January 24 and 25, attempts to break through the highway again failed. Only on the night of January 27, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division of N. S. Oslikovsky was able to break through the highway along the corridor covered by the rifle regiment of the 325th division. On the night of January 28, they were followed by the 1st Guards Cavalry, 57th and 75th Cavalry Divisions. By the morning of January 29, the 41st Cavalry Division joined the corps that had broken through the highway.

Literally immediately after that, the "gates" pierced in the German defense on the Warsaw highway were closed by the enemy. To the south of the highway, the second echelon of the corps headquarters, divisional artillery, rear divisions, and the corps hospital remained. The 239th and 325th rifle divisions that provided the breakthrough were withdrawn from the group of P. A. Belov and began to report directly to the headquarters of the Western Front. The 2nd Guards Tank Brigade also remained in Mosalsk, since it did not have time to receive new tanks before the corps broke through the highway. Thus, the corps broke through lightly, without tanks and artillery, which led to the not very successful actions of the cavalry near Vyazma. See Appendix II.1 for more details.

Appendix II

"Fading Operations" of the Western Front (February-April 1942)

1. The actions of the group of General Belov in the operational rear of the Germans[169]

The combat path of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps in World War II is great. From the banks of the Prut, through Chisinau, Balta, the Lower Dnieper, through the Southwestern Front, units of this corps passed with fierce battles. In the

difficult days of the Moscow defense, the cavalry corps was transferred to the Western Front and, as part of the group of the front commander, launched an offensive west of Serpukhov in the direction of the Troyanovo station, and then was transferred to the Kashira area, from where the first began to push Guderian's 2nd Panzer Army units to the southwest. Subsequently, the corps, reinforced with rifle divisions and renamed the Belov Task Force, acted together with the armies of the left wing of the Western Front, which brilliantly defeated the 2nd Panzer and 4th armies of the enemy. Belov's group, in difficult winter conditions, fought a brilliant path from the city of Kashira through Denev, Uzlovaya, Krapivna to Yukhnov.

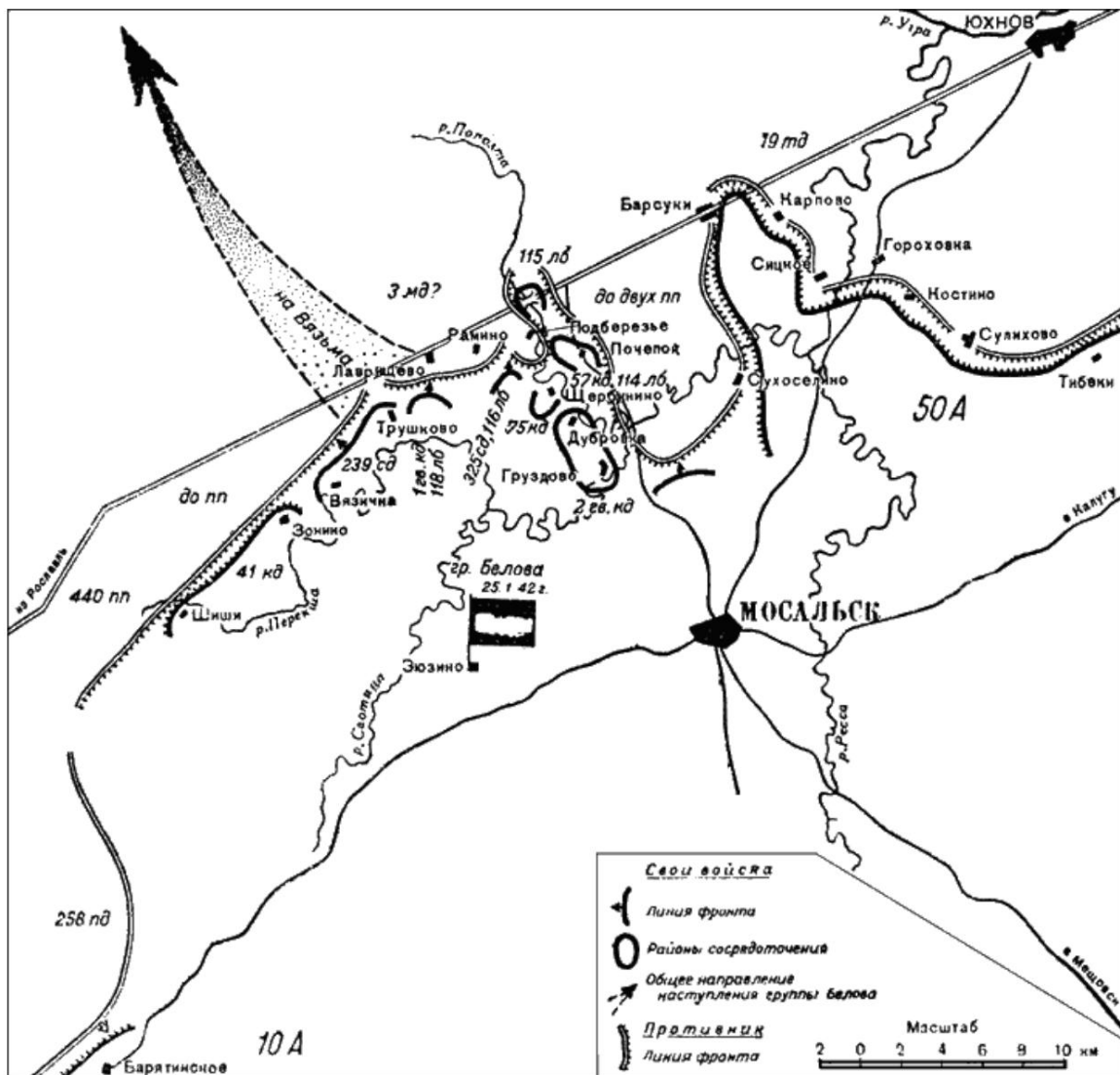
In the final period of the Moscow operation, the Belov group fought in the operational rear of the Germans in cooperation with the airborne troops and partisan detachments. This period of the combat activity of the group is the content of the operational-tactical essay given below. The essay was compiled by the headquarters of the Western Front and is of undoubted interest to the command staff when studying the experience of the Patriotic War.

1. Breakthrough of the German defenses

and a raid on Vyazma divisions waged stubborn offensive battles in the area of Varshavskoye highway (southwest of the city of Yukhnov) with the aim of breaking through the enemy defenses and further offensive in the direction of Vyazma. On the right, the 50th Army was advancing to capture the Warsaw Highway, with the task of encircling and

destroying the enemy's Yukhnov grouping; on the left, the 10th Army held the Baryatinsky area. General

the nature of the actions of the armies was determined by the main task of the troops of the left wing of the Western Front - to complete the defeat of the troops of the 4th German army, defeated on the southwestern approaches to Moscow.



The general situation in the area of operation of the Belov group on January 26, 1942

However, the uninterrupted two-month offensive of the left wing of the front, the harsh winter conditions and insufficient experience in conducting offensive operations did not give the troops the opportunity to develop a sufficiently vigorous offensive pace. Taking advantage of this, the enemy managed to firmly gain a foothold in a number of sectors, including in the Yukhnov region, defending it and the adjacent sectors of the Varshavskoe highway with particular stubbornness.

Since the left wing of the front included the guards cavalry corps, which was a fairly powerful mobile group, it was possible to use it to penetrate deep into the enemy's location, to strike at the rear of the enemy, followed by the defeat of his troops. But throwing the cavalry directly at the strongholds was inappropriate. Therefore, the front command planned to break through the defense of the Germans a section of the Varshavskoe highway southwest of the city of Yukhnov, where there were fewer large strongholds than in other sectors.

The initial attempts of the Belov group to break through the German defenses on the Warsaw highway in mid-January were not successful. Only at the end of January did the right-flank units manage to get close to the highway, and then break through the enemy front.

By the beginning of the operation, the Belov group included five cavalry and two rifle divisions, five ski battalions and one tank brigade. Its combat strength on January 20 was expressed in the following figures:

people - 28,000,
rifles - 18,500, light
machine guns and machine guns -
2300, easel and anti-aircraft machine
guns - 110 guns of various
calibers - 130, anti-tank guns -
34, mortars - 350,
tanks - 8

Parts, due to the losses incurred, had a different combat composition. The 1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions and the 325th Rifle Division were better equipped. Due to the limited maneuverability due to off-road, out of the total number of fighters and equipment, approximately:

active fighters - 10,000,
field guns - 100, anti-
tank guns - 30,
mortars - 300,
tanks - 8

The length of the front of the group was 40 km, which gave the following tactical density per kilometer of front:

fighters - 250,
field guns - 2.5, anti-
tank guns - 1, mortars - 7.5

Such an insignificant tactical density in this operation is also explained by the fact that the troops of the group in most cases had to operate not on a certain sector of the front, but on separate directions.

By this time, the enemy in front of the group's front had a total of up to two infantry divisions, which in numerical terms was equal to the combat strength of the group's forces taking part in the operation.

The defense of the Germans in the direction of the upcoming breakthrough of the group consisted of strongholds that were part of the system of resistance centers, built, as a rule, in settlements. The defense had a well-organized fire system in combination with various winter-type obstacles - snow ramparts, trenches, minefields, tanks and armored vehicles cruising along the highway. Between the individual strongholds there were comparatively weakly covered gaps, into which our units, especially the ski battalions, managed to penetrate with a fight.

Parts of the group by January 23, 1942 occupied the position shown in the diagram. By decision of the group commander, on January 24, the main forces were supposed to break through the enemy front in the Podberezye, Lavrishchevo sector, go north of the Varshavskoye highway and then intercept the Moscow-Minsk highway west of Vyazma. In

pursuance of this decision, parts of the group on January 24 and 25 launched an offensive without much success. Only the 115th ski battalion, operating along the eastern bank of the Popolta River, on January 25 managed to reach the Warsaw highway in the area of the bridge across this river. In this regard, the group commander decided to transfer one regiment of the 325th Rifle Division and the 75th Cavalry Division to the eastern bank of the Popolta River, using them to develop success.

On January 25, with the onset of darkness, parts of the Belov group again went on the offensive. Movement along the eastern bank of the river occurred at a speed of no more than 1–4 km per hour. At night, and especially during the day, the Germans fired heavily in crossfire from Pochepoki (from the western bank of the

river) and from Batishchevo. The lead 115th ski battalion and the 75th cavalry division were located near the Warsaw highway. In addition to these units, by this time two cavalry divisions, two infantry regiments and two mortar battalions had crossed to the east coast - that is, the entire group intended to enter the breakthrough.

During January 26, parts of the corps failed to break through the highway, and only on the night of January 27, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division (one regiment on foot, the rest on horseback), the 75th Cavalry Division (on horseback) with 216- m cavalry regiment (fully on horseback), the 57th cavalry division and the 115th ski battalion, having lost 55 people killed and wounded, broke through the Warsaw highway and left in a northerly direction, immediately losing contact with the group headquarters. By the same time, the 1st Guards and 41st Cavalry Divisions were concentrated along the Popolta River. The 212th regiment of the 57th cavalry division was left to guard the rear of the group in the Mosalsk area. The

breakthrough of the corps across the highway took place under the cover of the regiment of the 325th Infantry Division, which, with four anti-tank guns and six anti-tank rifles, occupied the bridge over the Popolta River and held it until the morning of January 27. After enemy counterattacks with tanks and armored vehicles, the regiment, having suffered losses, withdrew into the forest half a kilometer south of the bridge. The remaining regiments of

this division fought for the capture of the villages of Skulovo and Kholui. The 239th Rifle Division

covered the left flank of the corps, defending the line of Sapovo, Star. Grove. The 2nd Guards Tank Brigade, with its second battalion of 5 T-60 tanks, operated with the 325th Rifle Division. The motorized rifle battalion of the brigade operated with the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division. The first tank battalion (without materiel) and the headquarters of the 2nd Guards Tank Brigade were located in Mosalsk. The 1st Guards group of mortar units was also concentrated there to put in order the material

parts. The 152nd anti-aircraft division covered the landing area for transport aircraft supplying the troops of the group; The 191st anti-aircraft machine-gun battalion covered the headquarters of the group with one battery, and the other two batteries were located at the 1st and 2nd guards cavalry divisions.

As a result of the breakthrough on January 26, only part of the group entered the "corridor" between the Mosalsky Bolshak and the Popolta River, while the rest of the forces fought on the previous lines. The main

task for January 28, the commander of the group set the passage through the Warsaw highway of the 1st Guards and 41st Cavalry Divisions; divisional artillery was supposed to be transferred across the highway with the approach of the tanks of the 2nd Guards Brigade. After it became clear that the units of the group that had broken through, destroying and discarding small enemy infantry groups along the way, reached the Khoroshilovo and Kukolka area, at 16:45 on January 27, 1942, the group commander issued order No. 09. This order clarified the tasks in connection with successful breakthrough through the highway of the first echelon of the group. The assessment of the situation and tasks in this order were formulated as follows:

"Two adjacent defensive lines of the enemy, consisting of incomplete 19 TD and 15 PD, are located: the eastern one is Pochepok, Zhukovka, Moshchiny, Badgers [the last three are east of Pochepok, not on the diagram], the western one is Skulovo, Kholui, Ramino, Podberezye. Between these nodes there is a narrow forest strip, which does not have strongholds. The 57th, 75th, 2nd guards cd and part of the forces of the

325th rifle division passed into this zone. The cavalry group of Sokolov (Kalinin Front) on the morning of January 20 cut the highway 12 km west of Vyazma. To the right, units of the 173rd Rifle Division (50th Army) cut the highway in the B. 1 Guards the cavalry corps enters the raid with two night crossings and connects with the Sokolov cavalry group, cutting off Vyazma from the west and pinching large enemy forces into the encirclement.

The first echelon consisting of the 2nd guards, 75th and 57th cd, 115th, 114th and 116th ski battalions, commander Major General Oslikovskiy. At 06:00 28.1 concentrate in the area of Andreany, Selishcha, Kholmovaya, Khvatov Zavod, Babenki, Krasn. Spring.

By 06:00 on January 29, 1942, go to the area: Chepchugovo, Chernevo, Oreshki, Drozdovo, Pesochnya, St. Lenkino, Levykino, Grigorievo.

The second echelon consisting of 1st Guards and 41st Cadets, 118th Ski Battalion, commander Major General Baranov. During the night on 28.1, go along the path of the first echelon between the Mosalsk highway, Warsaw highways and the river. Popolta and 7:00 28.1 concentrate Podsosonki, Ivantseva, Leonova. By 06:00 29.1 concentrate in the area of Taganka, Lopatka, Yeskovo, Sumburovo. By 6:00 30.1 - the area of Podrezovo, Mikhalevo, Moloshino.

325th Rifle Division with tanks to take possession of the highway to take up a solid defense of it in the section (suit.) Glagolnya, Batishchevo, ensuring the unhindered passage of all parts of the corps through the enemy defensive zone. 239th Rifle Division to firmly hold the occupied line of Sapovo, Trushkovo, Vyazichnya, Nov. Grove.

Move units in the raid only at night. Start of movement from 13.00 daily. When moving, do not get involved in battle, strive in every possible way to bypass settlements occupied by the enemy. The axis of movement of the shtakor with 117 ski battalion: Lovaya - Khvatov plant - Drozdovo. Communication in the breakthrough, mainly by radios "North" and horse messengers. Divisional artillery of all parts of the group with fire

raids on the flanks to ensure the entry into the raid of the echelon of General Baranov. Take all regimental and battalion artillery on a sledge with you to the raid. The first task is to create an anti-tank defense on the Warsaw highway.

This order was carried out as follows. On the morning of January 27, as a result of an enemy counterattack, the passage to the north along the Popolta River was closed. Therefore, the 1st Guards Cavalry and 41st Cavalry Divisions were sent by the corps commander to Sherbinino, the northwestern outskirts of Pochepoki, Glagolnya. The first echelon of the group under the command of General Oslikovsky at that time was in Zakharino.

To restore the passage on the Warsaw highway 325, the rifle division with units of the 1st Guards Cavalry and 41st Cavalry Divisions continued the offensive during January 27, as a result of which the section of the highway between the Mosal Bolshak and the Popolta River was captured. The 41st Cavalry Division fought for Pochepok.

In connection with the capture of the highway, the second echelon of the group consisting of the 1st Guards Cavalry Division (without the 96th Guards Cavalry Regiment) crossed the highway on the night of January 29 and by the morning of January 29 fought out in the area of Fedotkovo, Khoroshilovo, Zakharino. On the night of January 30, the following broke through the highway: the 41st Cavalry Division, the 96th Guards Cavalry Regiment, the 117th Ski Battalion and the group headquarters. The 2nd Guards Tank Brigade remained in Mosalsk due to

the delay in the approach of tanks. Directly to the north of the highway, the cavalry units did not meet serious resistance from the Germans and continued their successful advance into the areas indicated by the front command. The narrow corridor, pierced by the troops of the group on the Warsaw highway, did not allow the cavalry to be provided with transport for transporting food and fodder. All divisional artillery, anti-aircraft weapons and divisional rears remained south of the Warsaw highway. Therefore, the cavalry divisions found themselves in extremely difficult conditions after 2–3 days. The area was extremely poor in food forage, and stocks were quickly

depleted. The peculiarities of the combat situation in the rear of the enemy forced the troops to expend much greater effort on the performance of combat missions. Movement through the forest, without roads, was very slow. The movement of troops took place only at night. With all the acuteness, the question arose of the evacuation of the wounded, who had to be placed in the villages.

Apparently, the exit of units of the 1st Guards Corps north of the highway for the Germans was somewhat unexpected, since on January 31 enemy transports hurriedly departed from Godunovka and Mikhali, occupied that day by units of the 41st Cavalry Division, in the northeastern and Vyazemsky directions. with strong cover. Some of the convoys and weapons in these areas were abandoned by the enemy.

The exit of the corps units to this area coincided with the actions of the units of the 4th Airborne Corps, about which General Belov knew that they were concentrating from the landing areas in the areas of Velikopolye and Kurakin, where they fought with the enemy. Upon reaching the boundary of the Ugra River, the headquarters of the group established contact with them. It was clarified that the 250th airborne

the landing regiment was located in the area of Lepekhi, Zhelanie, Gorodyanka, and in the area of Surzhik, Borodino, Tynovka - an airborne detachment.

By the same time, the advanced divisions of the 33rd Army were fighting at the line of Dashkovka, the Kaidakovo state farm, repelling enemy counterattacks. Sokolov's cavalry group, with its forward detachments, fought the Germans at the Yufanovo-Rozhnovo (northern Chepchugovo) line. However, communication with these units, groups and detachments was unreliable.

The enemy aviation kept the corps under its influence all the time and, despite the frequent snowfall, was very active, forbidding any movement of our troops during the day.

The settlements in the area of operations of the cavalry corps were packed with wounded and former prisoners of war of the Red Army, who have been feeding at the expense of the local population for several months now. In addition, a lot of food forage was taken out by the Germans. A significant number of partisans hid in the forests, some of which acted jointly with the 1st Guards Cavalry Division and the 250th Airborne Regiment.

Despite the extreme fatigue of the personnel and horsemen, the artillery lagging behind and the active opposition of enemy aircraft, the cavalry persistently moved towards the intended target and by the end of February 2 reached the nearest approaches to Vyazma.

As the corps advanced, the Germans intensified their resistance, trying to prevent the advance of the cavalry to the north. By the end of February 2, the enemy's front was determined in the form of an organized defense around Vyazma. In this regard, the advance of the cavalry slowed down, and she was again forced, as at Yukhnov, to wage protracted battles with the defending infantry and enemy tanks. The German command opposed the cavalry of General

Belov with significant forces created from the remnants of various units and newly arriving formations. So, the 5th Panzer Division received the task from the commander of the 4th Panzer Army - in the coming days to destroy the enemy units that had broken through, whose communication with other units was cut off. The exit of the main forces of the corps to the Star area. Stogovo, Moloshino, Panfilovo

actually ended the raid of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps.

Further actions of the group of General Belov resulted in the form of offensive battles in the operational rear of the enemy.

During January, despite the difficult conditions of the situation, the Guards Cavalry Corps managed to solve complex combat missions thanks to a persistent and correct method of action. With access to Vyazma, the corps found itself in an area densely saturated with partisan detachments. Separate groups, detachments, regiments, and later divisions took an active part in the further actions of the cavalry, often solving complex tactical problems. In parallel with the deployment of the actions of the corps, partisan detachments also grew. This circumstance greatly facilitated the solution of the tasks assigned to the corps, since its area of operations was large, and the available forces and means of personnel units were not enough. In addition, the airborne units thrown out on the path of the corps' offensive also took a direct part in its combat operations.

Thus, the actions of the cavalry, which had successfully reached the operational rear of the enemy by the beginning of February, were characterized by the fact that they did not proceed in isolation, but in cooperation with partisan detachments and airborne units. This position made it possible for the command to concentrate the main efforts of the cavalry in the main direction, covering their flanks and rear with the forces of partisan detachments. The 329th Infantry Division of the 33rd Army also took part in the actions of the corps.

2. Attack on Vyazma On

the night of February 2-3, the cavalry divisions of the group with limited firepower launched an attack on Vyazma from the south and southwest. The offensive of the group was poorly prepared and, as a result, was not successful. Parts of the corps reached the line Tesnikovo, Moloshino, Kapustino, inflicting losses on the enemy, who firmly held the approaches to Vyazma on the line of the state farm Kaidakovo, Stogovo, Podrezovo, Usadishche, Mishinka.

It was found that the enemy fortified in the settlements: Vetki, Sokolovo, Tishino, Krasny Holm, the state farm Kaidakovo, Batishchevo, Nesterovo, Stogovo, Podrezovo, Ilyino, Usadishche, Pesochnya, Sazino. In addition, in the area of Babenki, a truck approached from the south was unloading.

enemy echelon consisting of 10 wagons. The unloaded infantry, numbering up to two companies, moved north and part of the forces to Babenki. A company of infantry advanced from Subbotniki to Taganka. In the battles, soldiers of the 11th and 61st motorcycle battalions of the enemy were taken prisoner. Thus, as a result of the first offensive, the enemy grouping around the city of Vyazma was specified.

As a result, General Belov decided to abandon the frontal attack to the north, and go around in the direction of Grishino, Alferovo, Vysokoye in order to cut off the escape routes of the Vyazma grouping of the enemy and, in cooperation with the Sokolov cavalry group and airborne units, attack Vyazma from the west. However, this decision was not approved. front commander

ordered:

“Continue to complete the task... There is not much enemy in front of you. The march to connect with Sokolov will not give anything, except for the loss of time and the strengthening of the enemy. Yefremov [commander of the 33rd Army] is fighting for Vyazma in the Alekseevskoye region [the southern outskirts of Vyazma]. His command post is in the Zheltovka area. Establish a connection and interaction with him; bypass enemy settlements.”[170]

Fulfilling this order, the corps continued the offensive directly in the direction of the city. In view of the fragile

connection between the corps and the 33rd Army, at first there was not sufficient coordination in their actions. It took some effort to achieve cooperation with the 329th Rifle Division, which had passed from the 33rd Army under the command of General Belov, and with the 250th Airborne Regiment.

During February 3–4, the corps fought offensive battles on the same line. On the night of February 5, his units managed to capture Stogovo, and on the night of February 6 - Zubovo, wedged into the enemy defenses. In response, the Germans began to use their aircraft even more actively. In

connection with the protracted battles for Vyazma, the issue of food and some other types of supplies acquired an acute form: people and horses were starving, in the area where

the corps was completely lacking food; There was no gasoline to operate the radio stations.

On February 6, in order to strengthen the corps, General Belov was subordinated to the 8th airborne brigade, which operated in the Semlevo area. This brigade was supposed to advance in the direction of Gredyakino to join the corps. In

connection with the slow advance of the corps in the direction of Vyazma, the front commander ordered the corps, in cooperation with divisions of the 33rd Army, to destroy the enemy in the area of the state farm Kaidakovo, Red Hill, where the Germans began to show significant activity, pushing units of the 33rd Army east of the Vyazma railway — Splinter. For this purpose, the 329th Rifle Division and the 250th Airborne Regiment were allocated, which launched an offensive against the Kaidakovo state farm.

On the night of February 6-7, continuing to develop success in the direction of Vyazma, parts of the corps wedged even more into the enemy's position, capturing Mikhalki and Pastikh. By this time, various enemy groupings began to appear on the flanks and in the rear of the corps, but they did not bother General Belov at first. "Partisans are used to protect the rear," he reported, continuing to carry out the main task, on February 7, some units (the 117th ski battalion) managed to cross the Vyazma-Dorogobuzh highway, but this success was short-lived - the road was guarded by groups of enemy tanks and armored vehicles . The 75th Cavalry Division also tried to capture this highway, but failed: its attacks were repulsed by the fire of German tanks and armored vehicles. In parallel with an attempt to seize this road by parts of the corps, attempts were made to undermine the Vyazma-Dorogobuzh railway line, where German armored trains ran. By February 8, Sokolov's group was engaged in heavy fighting

with the enemy in the Chepchugovo area, and the 33rd Army fought on the Bol front. Gusevka, Gorozhanka, Gorby. In the area of the city of Dorogobuzh, partisan detachments were grouped, preparing for its capture in cooperation with airborne groups operating in the area. Thus, by February 8, four centers of struggle

were identified in the area of operations of the corps: southeast of Vyazma - in the sector of the 33rd Army, to the south and southwest - in the sector of the corps,

northwest - in the area of the Sokolov group and, finally, in the area of the city of Dorogobuzh. The space between the Vyazma-Zanoznaya railway and the Dnieper River turned out to be, in essence, a newly formed front behind enemy lines. This front had the peculiarity that the main forces of the cadre units were deployed to the north, while the partisan detachments covered them from the deep rear and flanks. Taking into

account this peculiarity of our grouping, the German command planned, first of all, to destroy the personnel units by separating them, and then to liquidate the partisan detachments. For this purpose, a corresponding build-up of forces was carried out south of the Vyazma-Smolensk highway, mainly in the Vyazma-Dorogobuzh section. The protracted offensive of our troops gave the enemy the opportunity to organize planned resistance.

The corps continued to develop the indicated success in the direction of Volodarets with the aim of capturing the Vyazma-Dorogobuzh highway, and later on the railway. At the same time, sabotage actions were being prepared in the same direction. At 7 pm on February 8, the corps again went on the offensive from the line of Selivanovo, Mishinka, Nesterovo, Pastikha, Stogovo, Kovaniki. But by this time, the 117th ski battalion and units of the 75th rifle division were driven back by the Germans from the highway with heavy losses. In this battle, the commanders of the ski battalion and the 230th cavalry regiment were killed; wounded - the battalion commissar, two company commanders and two political officers. At the same time, units of the 75th Cavalry Division repulsed a strong German counterattack on Pastikha, while 5 soldiers of the 5th Panzer Division

were captured. By this time, the 8th airborne brigade had disabled a section of the railway in the Rebrovo region and a highway in the Taratonovo region by demolition and destruction. The bold actions of this brigade on the night of February 8-9 destroyed the headquarters of the 5th Panzer Division and the 11th

Infantry Regiment. However, the German counterattacks became stronger. On the night of February 9, they captured Michalki and the forces of two infantry battalions with 8 armored vehicles tried to surround the 75th Cavalry Division in Pastikh. At the same time, part of the enemy forces was directed against the 8th Airborne Brigade. Grouping of Germans against

corps by this time was defined as follows: the districts of Krasny Holm, the state farm Kaidakovo, Batishchevo, Mikhalki, Volodarets, Paidino, Podrezovo, Ilyino, Usadishche and Moloshino were engaged in garrisons with an average strength of 100 to 300 people, with machine guns, mortars and artillery. In total, in these areas there were up to about 5000 bayonets with 20 tanks and armored vehicles.

It was pointless to continue the attack on such a grouping in the forehead. Therefore, General Belov turned to the front commander with a request to change the direction of the offensive instead of Vyazma to Semlevo, after mastering which to continue the offensive to Vyazma. He motivated the need for this decision by the strong defense of the Germans and the weak strength of their units (in the 57th cavalry division there were only 80 people with commanding staff, in the 2nd guards cavalry division - about 200 people, a similar picture was observed in other divisions). In addition, he had information that the Semlevo region is richer in food forage. The corps commander intended to bypass the right flank of the enemy from Semlevo, unite with Sokolov and cut off the enemy's escape route from Vyazma by joint actions.

to the west.

The 8th Airborne Brigade, following the order of General Belov to attack Gredyakino, by this time had captured Marmanovo, Savino, where it concentrated its main forces. This brigade was a good fighting unit, which reliably provided the left flank of the corps; [171] during the period of fighting in the rear of the Germans from February 1 to 8, it captured 72 vehicles, 4 tanks, 1 tractor, 19 motorcycles, 15 bicycles, two regimental colors, various staff documents. Continuing a successful offensive, on February 9, after stubborn fighting, she captured Diaglevo, while destroying about 100 enemy soldiers and officers. However, its further offensive was not successful - the Germans stubbornly defended themselves in the area of \u200b\u200bPesochnya, where they hastily threw up reinforcements from Vyazma.

At dawn on February 11, the Germans intensified their counterattacks on the front of the brigade, which, suffering losses, hardly held its positions. Under these conditions, the airborne brigade lost contact with the corps and with its detachment operating in the Rebrovo area. At the end of the day,

having established contact with the 41st Cavalry Division in the Diaglevo area, the brigade, together with it, launched an offensive against Pesochnya.

Thus ended the first stage of the operation of the group on the capture of Vyazma from the south.

3. The attack on Semlevo

It was not possible to break through the German defenses on Vyazma in the northern direction. A new decision has been made:

“Hiding behind the front of Selivanovo, Stogovo, Zabново 329 divisions and 250 airborne divisions, the rest of the forces will advance: 41 cd, 8 airborne brigade and 1gv. cd - through Diaglevo, 75 cd and 2 guards. kd from Stanische, Kaledino - to Astashovo, Gvozdikovo, Levykino, Grigorievo, striking at Vyazma from the west.

On February 12, units of the group occupied the position shown in scheme.

By this time, the Germans had thrown up infantry of an unknown number from Izdeshkovo to the Frolov, Ivanovka area and extended their right flank towards Dorogobuzh. Due to the small number

of combat personnel of the corps, the front command allowed General Belov to partially understaff the corps at the expense of partisan detachments operating in his area, many of whose fighters were once regular commanders and Red Army soldiers of Red Army units. Thus, the corps launched an offensive against Semlevo with a few reinforcements.

At 6 o'clock on February 13, a simultaneous attack on Semlevo began from three sides. But simultaneously with the offensive of the corps, the Germans launched a counter-offensive: one enemy battalion, supported by four tanks and armored vehicles, captured Marmanovo, and in the sector of the 329th Infantry Division, the Germans forced its units to leave Star. Troshino. As a result of the attack on

Semlevo, units of the 1st Guards Cavalry Division, the 41st Cavalry Division and the 8th Airborne Brigade broke into the outskirts of this point, where a street battle began, which continued until the end of the day. One of the enemy battalions with 5 tanks tried to come to the aid of the Semlevo garrison, but was forced to engage in battle with the 75th cavalry

division in the Belomir region. The 2nd Guards Cavalry Division was advancing on Marmanovo in order to destroy the enemy who had broken in there. The 57th Cavalry Division continued to remain in reserve in the Nivki area.

On February 14, stubborn street fighting continued, but they did not change the situation in this

area. By February 15, the Germans reinforced the Semlevo garrison with two battalions with 8 tanks. As a result of their counterattacks, the 75th Cavalry Division was driven back to the western outskirts of Semlevo, where it had entered the day before. The 8th Airborne Brigade managed to get north of Semlevo. However, the exit of the brigade into this area brought an unexpected result: it was surrounded by German units, which is why it was forced to break out of the encirclement in an easterly direction to the sector of the 41st Cavalry Division. But since Diaglevo by this time turned out to be a busy enemy, the brigade was forced to continue the fight surrounded.

Preventing the brigade from linking up with the 41st Cavalry Division, the Germans began to develop an offensive in the sector of the latter, pushing it to the east. By this time, the 2nd Guards Cavalry and 75th Cavalry Divisions were fighting in the Belomir region and captured this point by the end of the day. The 1st Guards Cavalry Division continued to hold the southeastern outskirts of Semlevo. Thus, the offensive that day was also

unsuccessful. The position of the corps was complicated by the fact that the 8th Airborne Brigade continued to be surrounded. The corps commander actually had nothing to develop a further offensive: all units were drawn into battle, and it was not advisable to risk a weak reserve in the form of the 57th cavalry division. According to the report of General Belov, "the losses were so great that in the regiments of the 1st Guards Division there were again 10-15 people fighting on foot." In addition, "the regimental artillery of the Guards divisions lagged behind", the guns got stuck in the snow, and their movement was possible only by hand.

It should be noted that the situation with artillery in the corps was generally unfavorable. The heavy losses suffered during the raid and subsequent battles forced General Belov to start

the formation of new batteries from captured materiel and with partisan artillerymen. However, this event also met with difficulties due to the lack of horses and harness. It was better with the material part - during the raid of the corps in the area of Beli, Mishinka, Pokrov, more than 100 of our guns and ammunition depots for them were discovered from among those left by our troops during the retreat in the fall of 1941.

As a result of the unsuccessful attack on Semlevo, on February 16, General Belov asked the front commander to suspend the offensive in order to replenish the regiments at the expense of partisans, at least 100 people per regiment. This activity has been approved. On the same day, the 8th Airborne Brigade, breaking through the encirclement, concentrated in the Alferovo, Bol. Petrovo. The front of the corps by this time was on the line of Selivanovo, Stogovo, Zabново, Kapustino, Belomir. The 8th

Airborne Brigade and the 1st Guards Cavalry Division, due to heavy losses, were concentrated behind the left flank of the corps in order to resupply and further use in the same direction. On February 16, the enemy continued to intensify attacks,

showing particular activity from the area of the state farm Kaidakovo, Nesterovo, Moloshino, Semlevo. On the night of February 17, the corps was regrouped in

order to organize a new offensive in the direction of Kaledino, Izborovo, Semlevo station in order to cut the Vyazma-Smolensk railway.

4. Attack on Yakovlevo The

planned strike plan between the Semlevo station and Rebrovo was somewhat changed in the course of subsequent events. The offensive of the corps actually developed in the direction of Yakovlevo, located west of Rebrovo. This small change in the direction of the offensive was not accidental - the Germans, strengthening their positions in the Vyazma region, forced the cavalry to move further and further with their left flank to the west. The stubbornness with which our command sought to bypass the flank of the German grouping, the enemy countered with a methodical lengthening of his right

flank. Apparently, the goal was pursued - to prevent the red cavalry from approaching Vyazma from the west. On February

18, the Germans occupied Stogovo and burned it, knocking out a battalion of the 250th airborne regiment from there. In order to prevent active enemy actions on the far left flank of the corps, a cavalry regiment of the 1st Guards Cavalry Division was sent to the city of Dorogobuzh to reinforce the partisan detachments located there on the same day with the task of capturing the Dorogobuzh (Safonovo) station together with the partisans, destroying the railway and prevent enemy movement on the freeway.

The 8th airborne brigade, which had heavy losses in recent battles, was replenished by order of the front command with paratroopers consisting of about 300 people, dropped into the corps' area of operations. [172]

The enemy was in the previous grouping, and the area railway Vyazma - Alferovo was covered by armored trains.

At 7 pm on February 18, parts of the corps went on the offensive. By the end of the day, despite the continuous counterattacks of the Germans, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division captured Izborovo. The rest of the day was not successful. The next day, the position of the units did not change, with the exception of the sector of the 8th airborne brigade, which captured Sakulino. Under the blows of parts of the corps, the Germans retreated to the east and west, forming, as it were, a corridor in the general direction to Yakovlevo. Developing the offensive, on February 20, parts of the corps occupied Gvozdikovo. By the end of that day, the front line passed through Gvozdikovo, Sakulino, Izborovo, Belomir. Thus, Sakulino was the nearest point to the railway, which was 6–7 km away.

The next day, parts of the corps managed to advance even further north - Bekasovo was taken, and the 41st Cavalry Division fought for Berezki. The Semlevo station and the railway were in the zone of cavalry artillery fire. It seemed certain that the success of the corps this time would be guaranteed. However, the Germans, feeling a real threat to their rear, threw everything they had at hand to the place of the breakthrough. Their aviation that day sharply increased its activity. At the same time, the enemy launched an offensive on the front of the 75th Cavalry Division from the Semlevo area in a southerly direction.

In this regard, the offensive of the corps stopped. Night attacks by corps units in the direction of Rebrovo were repulsed by strong enemy fire.

On February 22,

fighting continued on the same lines, and on the 23rd the Germans counterattacked the 8th Airborne Brigade, occupied Bekasovo and again surrounded this brigade, which, with heavy losses, was forced to fight its way to Berezki. By the end of the day, repeated counterattacks restored the situation in this sector, and Bekasovo was again occupied by parts of the corps. On the same day, the 41st Cavalry Division captured the village of Yakovlevo, pushing the enemy back to the railroad.

Thus, despite the opposition of the Germans, parts of the corps managed to penetrate deeply into the location of their defenses between Rebrovo and Alferovo, putting the enemy before the fact that the cavalry would reach the railroad. But this area was already almost 30 km west of Vyazma, and the ultimate goal of the corps' actions became more and more distant.

Yakovlevo could not be held for a long time. With the fire of three armored trains and strikes by their bomber aircraft, the Germans forced the 41st Cavalry Division to leave this point and retreat to the south. The absence of artillery and our aviation put the cavalry in unequal conditions in combat with the enemy. In addition, ammunition was

running out. Leaving corps units in a narrow corridor for a long time was tactically unprofitable; connection with Sokolov's group failed. One battalion of the 8th airborne brigade, having the task of establishing contact with Sokolov, fought for two days to no avail north of the Semlevo station. Losses of

parts of the hull increased, especially in connection with the use by the Germans of a significant number of six-barreled mortars. True, on February 21, reinforcements in the form of its 4th battalion (25 people) were again dropped to reinforce the 8th airborne brigade in the Yurino area, but the main units remained still small in number. By February 25, as a result of incessant enemy

counterattacks with the support of tanks, parts of the corps were withdrawn to the line of Izborovo, Zabolotye, and this time the 8th airborne brigade, and with it the 41st cavalry division, with difficulty

made their way out of the encirclement and concentrated by the end of the day in the area of Kaledino, Vysokoe. The left-flank units of the corps took up defensive positions at the line of Zabolotye, Bushukovo, Vysokoye, thus ending the offensive operation on Yakovlevo. The situation on the sector of the 329th Rifle Division and the 75th Cavalry Division remained unchanged.

Consequently, the third attempt of the cavalry to capture Vyazma by bypassing it from the west also failed. However, the initiative for actions in the operational rear of the Germans here was in the hands of the corps commander. The main forces of the corps put themselves in order and prepared for the offensive from Izdeshkovo.

5. The offensive of the group in the

Izdeshkovo area Having regrouped towards his left flank, General Belov again organizes an offensive in a northern direction. On February 27, in connection with the gradual approach of the left flank of the group to the city of Dorogobuzh and the marked concentration of Germans north of this city, it was decided to send the entire 1st Guards Cavalry Division to Dorogobuzh. On February 28, this division set out for the city of Dorogobuzh, where it remained for the rest of the time, actively defending the city area together with partisan detachments.

All parts of the strike group of the corps, after the battles in the Yakovlevsky direction, put themselves in order, conducting defensive battles in separate areas with the Germans continuing the offensive. At the same time, the command and headquarters of the group developed an operation to organize a raid with the aim of destroying the railway bridge across the Dnieper River west of Izdeshkovo.

On the night of March 2, General Belov decided to take part of the forces of the strike group to their starting position in the Kakushkino area, from where they would raid. In fact, the shock group was concentrated by the scheduled date in the area of Krivye Nivki, Yurino, Karacharovo, Bol. Villagers - in a forest on the eastern bank of the Dnieper.

On the night of March 3, these units set out in the direction of the railway bridge. The 8th Airborne Brigade, without meeting resistance, quickly went to the Pleshcheyevo, Zimnyaya area; 41st Cavalry Division - to the Gorodyanka area; 2nd Guards Division

- in the Danilovo district. But in the area of Pleshcheyevo, Zimnyaya, the Germans were noticed, who started a battle with the advanced detachments of the group, and then quickly, pulling up infantry and an armored train, repulsed the attack of units of the 8th Airborne Brigade and the 41st Cavalry Division.

Since the operation of the group was unraveled by the enemy, the well-conceived raid failed, and parts of the group, hiding behind the rearguards, withdrew to their original position. The Germans, repelling the attack of the cavalry, in turn launched a counteroffensive, as a result of which they firmly secured Milyutino, Vorontsovo, Bezmenovo, Emelyanovo, Perestenki. Thus, this direction turned out to be closed to the cavalry.

But the group continued to persistently carry out the assigned task of the front commander. Again, an offensive is being prepared with the aim of capturing the railway and the subsequent attack on Vyazma. However, events on the right flank of the corps forced the command of the group to send its entire strike group to the area of operations of the 329th Infantry Division, where the Germans occupied Nikolskoye, Selishche, Krasnoye, Grishino, Bol on March 3. Petrovo.

The blows of the enemy put the right flank of the group in a difficult position. The 329th Rifle Division and the 250th Airborne Regiment, not having sufficient forces to counter the Germans in all directions, were under the threat of encirclement in the occupied area. In addition, the front of the group was splitting into two parts, which could lead to undesirable complications in the future. On the same day, the Germans, rapidly moving south and southwest, captured Yurino, Paporotnoye, Kolodeznoye, Luzhki, further complicating the situation on the right flank of the group. The 329th Rifle Division and the 250th Airborne Regiment were surrounded. Communication with this group has been lost.

According to the characteristics of General Belov, the following situation had developed at the front of the

group by this time: **Enemy.** Up to two companies with three tanks advanced to Gorki (26 km south of Vyazma) and occupied Selishche. More than two infantry battalions with 5 tanks captured Yurino, Paporotnoye, Kolodeznoye, Luzhki. The March 3 offensive was supported first by 11 and then by 7 bombers. From Stanische to Keverevo moves 40

skiers. A company advances from Nikulino to Bashukovo. In the Bessonovo, Ermolino area there are up to 500 people and an artillery division. Artillery firing at Bashukovo. Izdeshkovo is defended by the forces of an infantry battalion and a battalion of sappers with artillery. Almost all villages 12 km south of the railway are being defended. West of the Dnieper River, the approaches to Safonovo are defended by the 112th Infantry Division. There are three armored trains on the railway.

Your troops. The 329th Rifle Division with the 250th Airborne Regiment are fighting in encirclement, striking at Selivanovo, Losmino and Selishche. She has not been contacted for over a day. The 75th Cavalry Division with the remnants of the 117th Ski Battalion holds Ryzhkovo, Bol. Staroselye, Andreevshchina, Sapronovo. The 57th cavalry division holds Laptevo, Bashukovo, Lagazino, providing the right flank of the shock group. The strike group of the corps, consisting of the 41st Cavalry Division, the 8th Airborne Brigade and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division, is concentrated in the area of Krivye Nivki, Tupinino, Danilovo, Denisovo, Bol. villagers. The 1st Guards Cavalry Division with a partisan detachment and the population involved is carrying out defensive work around Dorogobuzh. The main forces are successively destroying enemy garrisons along the Dorogobuzh-Sapronovo highway. The partisan detachment of Grachev (up to 500 people) is located in the Fursovo region (16 km west of the Ugra junction), from where it destroys the railway at the Verterkhovo station section, the Debryansky junction, fettering the enemy occupying Vskhody. More than 2,000 wounded and sick were stationed in the area of Khvatov Zavod, Koptevo, Sergeevo. In the squadrons of each division (except the 1st Guards Cavalry) - no more than 15 people who can only fight on foot. The 57th and 75th cavalry divisions had no artillery since the beginning of their formation. All artillery of the 329th Infantry Division was left in the 33rd Army. Ammunition has been delivered, but most of it has fallen into disrepair. The partisan movement in depth is developing successfully.

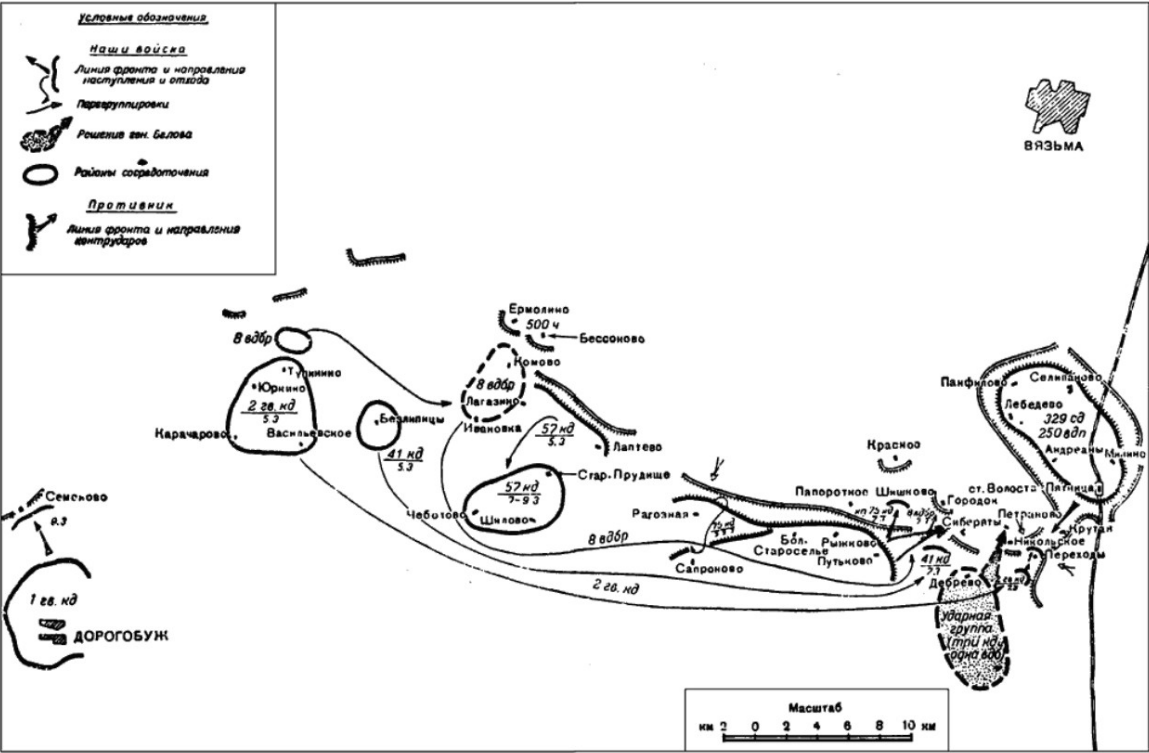
In this situation, General Belov asked to indicate what task for the corps should be considered the main and first, namely: an attack on Vyazma from the west, mastery of the railway (and in what area) or holding the city of Dorogobuzh? Personally, he would have thought it more realistic to concentrate all forces in the Dorogobuzh area, with the task of capturing

railroad and highway in the area between Izdeshkovo and Vyshegor station (west of Izdeshkovo) in order to cut off the Vyazemskaya grouping from the west until our larger forces approach from the south or north. General Belov considered holding a front 80 km long a difficult task for his forces, creating a constant threat of the enemy seizing the initiative.

6. Offensive to liberate the 329th from the encirclement rifle division and the 250th airborne regiment

Due to the difficult situation on the right flank of Belov's group, the front commanders gave the order to release their units from the enemy's encirclement. In accordance with this, the following plan of action was determined: a strike group consisting of three cavalry divisions and the 8th airborne brigade would go through two crossings to the area of Debrevo, Knyazhnoye, Khvatov Zavod, from where, on the night of March 7, deliver the main blow through Nikolskoye to Petranovo in order to restore the position of the 329th Infantry Division, and part of the forces of the 75th Cavalry Division to attack Sibiryaty, inflicting a pinching blow in this direction.

By the end of March 4, parts of the group occupied the position shown in the diagram. From this position, parts of the strike group marched to the area designated for concentration, regrouping to the right flank.



The offensive of the Belov group in the Transitions area from March 7 to 9 the goal of liberation from the encirclement of the 329th Infantry Division.

The offensive began at dawn on 7 March. The 2nd Guards Cavalry Division launched an attack on the Transitions; 41st Cavalry Division - in the direction of Siberyata; 8th Airborne Brigade - to Gorodok. The 75th Cavalry Division was advancing on Shishkovo with part of its forces. At the same time, the 329th Rifle Division launched an offensive towards the strike group in the direction of Siberyata.

Despite heavy enemy machine-gun, mortar and artillery fire from the Siberyaty, Krasnoe and Paporotnoye area, the 8th Airborne Brigade quickly captured the Gorodok area, and the regiment of the 75th Cavalry Division captured the village of Shishkovo. The advancing units met the most stubborn resistance near the village of Transitions. As a result of a continuous one and a half day offensive battle, by

March 8 it was not possible to achieve success. The Germans, having concentrated up to three infantry battalions with an artillery battalion and 8 tanks, stubbornly held back the advance of the group in the Transitions, Siberyaty sector. However, by the end of March 8, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division managed to capture Transitions, where it was forced to move to temporary defense, having enemy infantry and tanks in front of it. On March 9, stubborn fighting continued on the entire front of the group. Apparently, the blow of the 2nd

Guards Cavalry and 329th Rifle Divisions, advancing from two directions, shook the Germans' stability, since by the end of that day the direction of Transitions, Volost station, Pyatnitsa turned out to be a closed enemy much weaker than the day before. By the same time, separate groups of soldiers and commanders of the 329th Infantry Division began to exit the encirclement through the Transitions area. But on March 10, the enemy, with forces of up to 400 people, again seized the Transitions with a counterattack, pushing the 2nd Guards Division back to its original position. It seemed that the exit from the encirclement of the 329th Infantry Division would be stopped. However, this did not happen. Using the forest, bypass roads, the division continued to seep into the area where the strike group was located. By March 11, about 200 people from the 329th Rifle Division and 120 people from the 250th Airborne Regiment had left the encirclement.

By March 14, all the surviving personnel of these units had completely left the encirclement. Thus, the task of liberating their right-flank units from the encirclement by the troops of the group was basically completed. True, they failed to completely break the encirclement of the Germans in this area, but the purpose of this offensive was, first of all, the liberation of their encircled troops.

A quick regrouping and many days of offensive battles seriously affected the condition of the entire group. According to the reports of General Belov, the personnel of the strike group of the corps were exhausted to the extreme. People fell down and fell asleep in the snow. The small number of firepower did not allow the development of active operations. There was nothing to repel enemy tank attacks, there were only two 37-mm anti-tank guns, the rest were out of order; gun crews were out of order. In addition, the offensive was carried out in a continuous blizzard, in deep snow.

The combat composition of the corps by this time included:

- people - 6252,
- horses - 5165,
- rifles - 3432, light
- machine guns - 128, machine
- guns - 1047, heavy
- machine guns - 43, anti-tank
- rifles - 19; guns: 76 mm - 24, 45
- mm - 11,
- 37 mm - 2,
- mortars of all
- calibers - 61

By March 13, the corps went on the defensive on the entire front. However, he did not have to stay in this position for long. In the area of the Ugra station, a significant group of Germans was surrounded. The situation required the presence of cavalry in the area.

7. Offensive in the area of the Ugra junction

By March 13, Belov's group was defending the areas shown in the diagram.
329th Rifle Division and 250th Airborne Regiment

units that emerged from the encirclement concentrated in the Selipka, Potapovo, Voroponovo, and Zheltoukhi areas. The 1st Guards Cavalry Division was still in the Dorogobuzh area. By this time, thanks to the active actions of the overgrown partisan detachments, German units in some areas began to be surrounded. Such a situation arose in the area of the Ugra junction, where the actions of the partisan detachments of Zhabot and Grachev surrounded the enemy grouping, which was part of his forces operating along the Vyazma-Zanoznaya railway.

The presence of the enemy in the rear of the group, guarded in fact only by partisans, who, as a rule, could not wage long battles with regular German units, was fraught with grave consequences. Therefore, the elimination of the enemy surrounded in the Ugra junction area was the next task of the group. By March 16, after the regrouping of part of the forces in the direction of the Ugra junction, the units took the following position: • The 41st Cavalry Division entered the Sidorovich area; • The 2nd Guards Cavalry Division occupied

Subbotniki, and with two regiments defended the line of Babenki, Godunovka;

- The 8th Airborne Brigade concentrated in the Loma area; • The 329th Rifle Division, replacing the 8th Airborne Brigade, took up defensive positions in the Mitrokhino-Debrevo sector; • The 75th Cavalry Division defended the former line -

Putkovo, Ryzhkovo, Bol. Staroselye, Andreevshchina, Sapronovo;

- The 57th Cavalry Division defended the line of Sunkovo, Shilovo, Star. Prudishche. With

such a wide front, the actions of the corps on the Ugra could have the nature of a flank attack involving only part of the forces.

In parallel with the preparation of the attack on the Ugra station, General Belov, with the sanction of the front commander, turned the small 41st, 57th and 75th cavalry divisions to staff the 1st and 2nd guards cavalry divisions. Thus, only two cavalry divisions remained in the group.

On the night of March 21, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division, together with partisan detachments, launched an attack on the Ugra junction from several directions. The offensive was not successful: the uncoordinated actions of the partisan detachments and their low combat capability made it impossible to capture the heavily fortified Ugra junction area with a swift throw. The offensive continued on March 22–23, but it did not produce significant results. Due

to the impossibility of attracting other forces for this operation, further actions turned into a protracted siege of the enemy's Ugrin grouping.

Thus, the front of the entire Belov group temporarily stabilized, as it were: our troops were on the defensive in most sectors of the front; the Germans conducted reconnaissance and concentrated their forces for further action against the group. The comparative lull by the Germans was apparently taken as a sign of the group's defeat. In separate sectors of the front of the Belov group, prisoners were taken, who, on behalf of their command, offered parts of the group to surrender. So, in the Debrevo area, parts of the group captured two soldiers of the 23rd Infantry Division, who came from Siberyata with a proposal to units of the 329th Infantry Division to surrender. This indicated that the German command did not have a clear idea about the composition of the group and its high morale. Attempts by the Germans to break up the group in parts were unsuccessful.

The time of the struggle dragged on, March was running out, but the group continued to occupy a large area in the operational rear of the enemy. Partisan detachments continued to actively help the group. There was a need for their further organization, armament and training. It should be noted that most of the partisan detachments showed sufficient perseverance in carrying out their combat missions. Among them was, for example, the partisan detachment "Northern Bear" under the command of Grachev, which caused a lot of anxiety to the Germans. His actions were quite purposeful and successful.

However, the isolated actions of partisan detachments in this situation were not decisive. The stubborn defense of the Germans necessitated the concentration of larger regular forces in this sector; the situation with the reserves in the group was still difficult. Until the end of March, the position of the

group remained unchanged. The further struggle of the Belov Task Force took the form of defensive battles that continued throughout April-June 1942.

8. General

conclusions 1. The initial operational goal - the capture of the city of Vyazma - was not achieved by the group. The technically poorly equipped guards cavalry corps had to

to break through the enemy's defensive line and, having penetrated into his deep operational rear, again overcome the fairly strong German defenses on the outskirts of Vyazma. Despite the failure to fulfill its common task,

the corps managed to firmly chain the German troops stationed in the Vyazma, Dorogobuzh, Spas-Demensk region to itself, disrupting the normal operation of their rear for a long time. The enemy was forced to spend February and March in order to prevent the expansion of the territory occupied by the troops of the Belov group, and to keep in his deep rear a number of formations intended to strengthen the forward positions of the front. In addition, the fact that a large mobile group had penetrated into the operational depth of the German defense kept the German command

in constant tension, in readiness to organize counteraction to possible new attempts by our troops to develop success in the lines of action of the Belov group. The Germans extremely stubbornly defended the city of Yukhnov and the Warsaw highway adjacent to it. In fact, the entire right-flank grouping consisting of the 13th, 43rd, 53rd and 40th army corps was involved in the fight in this area. In connection with the exit of the Belov group near Vyazma, the Germans were pinned down at the same time directly near Vyazma and near Yukhnov. Such a bifurcation of the operational efforts of the German command was extremely beneficial for us. Using it, our command could carry out at that time on the rest of the front any measures necessary to further consolidate the success of the Western Front. In this sense, one cannot underestimate a major operational

the significance of the actions of the Belov group in February-March 1942.

2. The operational forms of the struggle of the group were very diverse; At the beginning of their actions, the group (cavalry corps) successfully and fairly quickly made a raid in the direction of Mosalsk, Vyazma; in the future, she carried out an offensive against a previously fortified enemy on narrow and wide fronts; fought defensive battles - in most cases on a wide front; carried out raids and raids on individual objects and, finally, in cooperation with partisan detachments, carried out sabotage operations on the rear communications of the enemy. In addition, the group carried out by its actions deep ground reconnaissance of the enemy, than

provided the front command with constant monitoring of the nature of the actions of the Germans in their deep rear. 3. The tactics of the

actions of the units and subunits of the group were also versatile. The actions of small groups of cavalry in most cases were successful. During the raid, squadrons and regiments, along with constant reconnaissance, carried out marches in difficult winter conditions. In the offensive or defense, on foot, in most cases they performed well the tasks assigned to them; when carrying out raids, they actively acted as reconnaissance or forward detachments. Poor technical equipment often prevented squadrons and regiments from using all tactical forms of combat. 4. The main requirement is confirmed to provide the cavalry during its operations in winter behind enemy lines with light field artillery, self-propelled or adapted for

operations in deep snow conditions. Parts of the corps repeatedly found themselves in a difficult situation only because the artillery, small in composition, got stuck in the snow and had to be dragged by hand, or due to losses in the horse composition from the bombing of enemy aircraft, it could not keep up with the cavalry in a timely manner. The absence of tanks in the group caused an urgent need for anti-tank artillery, due to the lack of which the fight against tanks was carried out by means of the cavalry itself.

5. Interaction with aviation was carried out most fully in relation to the joint work of parts of the group with fighters and bombers. Aircraft of the U-2 type were widely used to maintain communications and conduct reconnaissance, and aviation was also used to transport the wounded, sick and some types of supplies.

During the raid, parts of the corps were covered by our aircraft extremely weakly, which is why they suffered heavy losses from the continuous impact of enemy aircraft. Subsequently, having a squadron at his disposal, the corps commander had great opportunities in this regard - but still too little

the number of aircraft did not allow them to be used for joint enemy attacks on the battlefield.

As the experience of using aviation during the operations of the group of General Belov showed, it is advisable to base all types of aviation on their permanent or advanced airfields. In this case, it is always provided with fuel and the necessary repairs, without which its work becomes impossible at all. The absence of fuel in the area of operations of the corps completely ruled out the possibility of basing aviation on airfields built on the territory of the group's operations. In addition, the presence of all aviation there without sufficient cover threatened to completely destroy it by enemy aircraft.

Thus, the experience of the actions of the Belov group once again confirmed the need for reliable air cover for cavalry formations and support for their actions in the operational rear of the enemy with their aircraft.

6. The difficulty of supplying the cavalry with certain types of allowances (for example, fodder) is one of the most difficult problems, since it is impossible to feed it at the expense of local funds in modern conditions. The group of General Belov already on the third day after the breakthrough of the German front was in an extremely critical situation - people and horses were starving. The organization of the rear of a mobile group in the absence of ground communications with the main front line of friendly troops is directly dependent on the possibilities of using transport aviation. General

Belov's group operated under comparatively favorable conditions. The territory between Vyazma, Dorogobuzh and Spas-Demensk was saturated with partisans and Soviet people who provided all possible assistance to our troops. But nevertheless, the specificity of the rear service in supporting the actions of large groups of troops in no way removes from the higher command the primary concern for the organization of their rear.

In this case, the corps command had to resolve these issues on its own. Using the help of partisans, local party and Soviet workers, and collective farmers, this task was successfully completed. There were no cases that during February-March the work of the rear of the group was in any way disrupted. Delivery of food, ammunition, evacuation of the wounded and

patients, the repair of the material part and the collection of trophy property were carried out uninterruptedly:

The organization of the rear service was rather complicated: instead of trips to supply stations or head depots, divisions had to organize foraging, sometimes in rather remote areas; the wounded and sick, instead of being evacuated to field hospitals, were placed in villages with appropriate care and treatment. Finally, a new type of work took place - the search and collection of cargo dropped by aircraft for the corps. The complexity of the work of the rear of the mobile group in the operational rear of the enemy requires the most careful preparation and the advance implementation of a number of measures in the areas of forthcoming operations.

7. Communication was carried out by communications aircraft and by radio, and was generally stable; the command of the group always had a connection with the command of the front.

Communication between the headquarters of the corps and the formations was carried out mainly by horse messengers and by wires of permanent telephone lines (about 100 km of permanent lines were restored by the corps). The group did not have any particular difficulties in communicating down.

To ensure the uninterrupted operation of communications during operations behind enemy lines, it is necessary to widely use radio and mobile communications, develop control documentation in advance (call signs of radio signal tables, data for communication with neighbors), and create power supplies for radio stations.

8. Manning and arming were allowed in two ways: by manning and arming at the expense of local

resources and by transferring people and weapons through aircraft. In the first case, they were carried out at the expense of partisans and captured property, but this method is not entirely reliable: not all partisan personnel can be used to staff personnel units, and the availability of captured weapons depends on the success of the actions of this unit. Therefore, we hope to resolve issues only in these ways.

it is forbidden.

On the other hand, the transfer of reinforcements and weapons by aircraft encounters opposition from enemy aircraft, requires a significant number of transport aircraft and causes

possible damage to the material part when dropping it on parachutes. When organizing an operation, all these issues must be resolved depending on the specific conditions. On the issue

of recruiting horses, it should be borne in mind that some cavalry units, in the event of the loss of horses, will be forced to act as infantry or, at best, as motorized units (in the presence of captured vehicles and fuel).

When transporting weapons by air, the best packaging is necessary for the purpose of the greatest safety, since a significant part of the weapons, especially machine guns, dropped by the troops of the group, turned out to be damaged. In all cases, it is necessary to use the possibility of landing aircraft with unloading weapons and ammunition on the ground.

9. The long stay of the group in one area was a stimulating factor for the development of the partisan movement. Acting independently under the leadership of the headquarters of the partisan movement, partisan detachments in direct contact with raiding formations can be operationally subordinate to them.

When using partisan detachments in combat, it is necessary to take into account their condition and specific tactics of operations, without turning weak partisan detachments into semi-regular units. The methods of combat use of partisan detachments consist in setting them tasks for reconnaissance, carrying out attacks, sabotage and simple offensive or defensive battles - both independently and in cooperation with raiding formations.

10. The actions of the group clearly confirmed the possibility, under the conditions of modern warfare, of organizing and conducting large-scale operations of mobile groups in the operational rear of the enemy. The actions

of a mobile group that has broken through behind enemy lines must be of an exceptionally maneuverable nature. The group must be given broad initiative in choosing the objects of defeat, the nature and area of its operations. Linking the actions of raiding groups with one task is not practical.

Any transition of mobile raiding groups and various detachments to the defense behind enemy lines means a loss of initiative and defeat. Defense behind enemy lines is unacceptable and harmful.

The introduction of mobile groupings into the operational rear of the enemy necessarily implies a carefully worked out plan for ensuring a return exit to friendly troops.

2. Operations of the 4th Airborne Corps in [173] the operational rear of the enemy—

The material below is a brief operational tactical sketch of the actions of the 4th Airborne Corps. The essay does not give a complete picture of the actions of the corps. It does not cover the organization of an airborne operation, which was carried out on such a large scale for the first time in the practice of the Patriotic War. Noting only combat operations, the essay does not give a description of the organization, the state of the airborne corps and the conditions for its combat work. The actions of the armies interacting with the corps (especially the 50th Army) are not fully reflected, on the fulfillment of tasks by which the actions of the landing corps also depended to a large extent. Despite such major

shortcomings, the essay is of considerable interest as the first attempt to summarize the combat experience of using airborne formations in front-line operations.

General situation

Retreating after the defeat near Moscow in December 1941, the Germans tried to resist at the turn of Volokolamsk, Mozhaisk, Yukhnov, Sukhinichi. Taking into account the current situation, the command of the Western Front organized additional measures aimed at completing the defeat of this German grouping. One of these measures was the airborne assault behind the retreating enemy troops.

The first relatively small airborne assault forces were dropped in early January 1942 in front of the front of the 43rd Army with the tasks of assisting ground forces in defeating the enemy's Medyn-Myatlev grouping. In the future, the number and composition of airborne assault forces began to increase. Already at the end of January, on the way of the raid of the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps of General Belov on Vyazma, the 250th Airborne Regiment and the 8th Airborne Brigade interacted with him.

Due to the special stubbornness of the enemy in the Yukhnov area, the front command was forced to reinforce this direction with larger airborne detachments. Since the 250th Airborne Regiment and the 8th Airborne Brigade, together with the 1st Guards Cavalry Corps, were involved in military operations in the Vyazma region, the 9th and 214th brigades - included, as well as previously thrown out units, into the 4th airborne corps. The current situation necessitated the gradual transformation of almost all of the airborne detachments thrown out into ordinary rifle

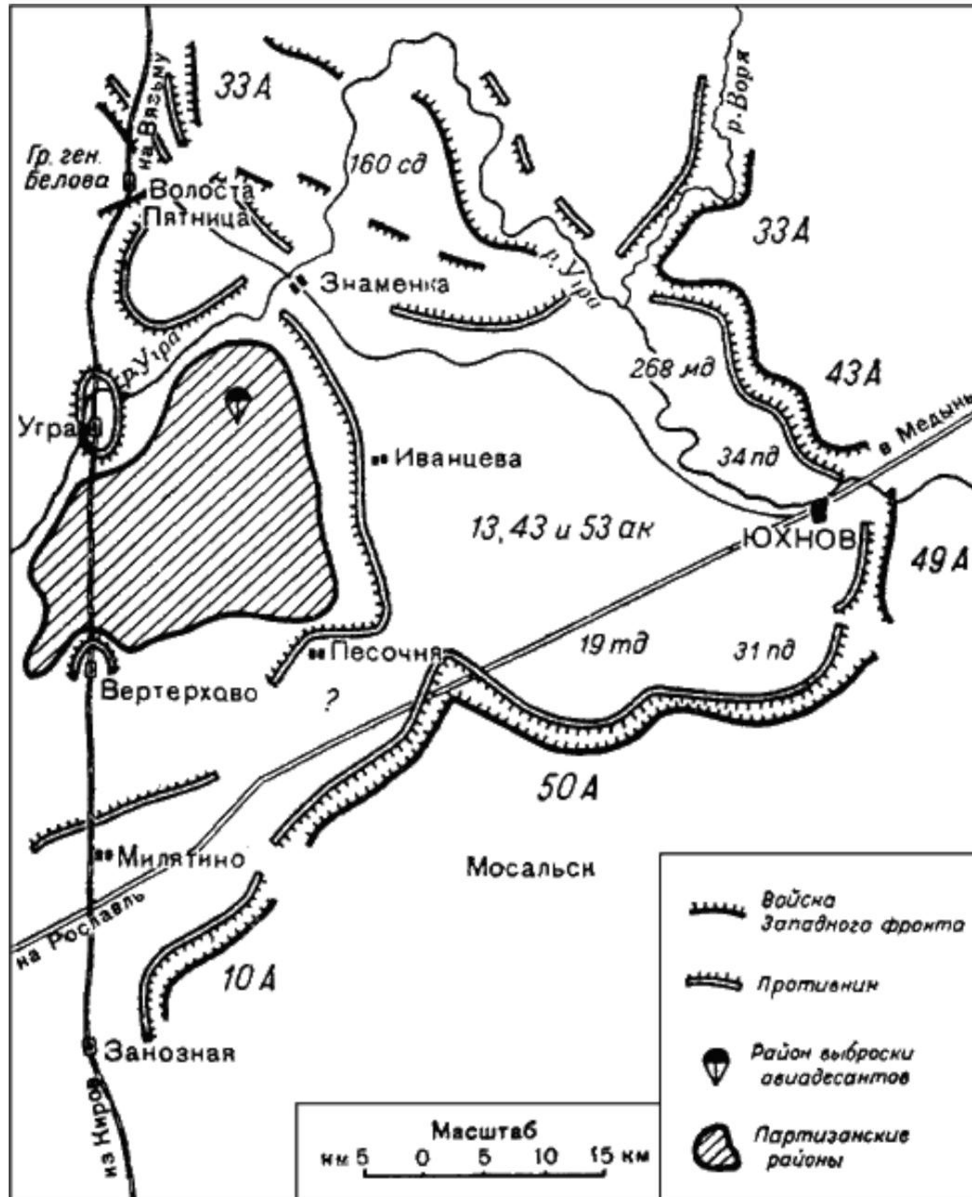
units, and some into partisan detachments. The long stay of detachments behind enemy lines as infantry units often put these units in a critical situation: they had neither supply bases nor their own rear areas. At the same time, the specificity of the organization and nature of the combat operations of the airborne detachments did not always allow them to successfully resolve complex combat missions; the ground enemy turned out to be stronger than them, so they were sometimes forced to limit their role to holding down actions on one or another sector of the front.

There is no doubt that if the airborne detachments had tanks and artillery, they would significantly increase their strike force and be able to deploy active operations on a much wider scale. However, even in the composition in which they operated, the detachments not only inflicted significant losses on the German troops, but also fettered large enemy forces for a long time. In general, the actions of the airborne troops justified their losses. In mid-February 1942,

after the breakthrough of the shock group of the 33rd Army and the group of General Belov in the direction of the city of Vyazma, the offensive of the central armies of the Western Front was suspended. The enemy firmly held the area of the city of Yukhnov, apparently with the aim of deploying further active operations in the Moscow direction. To pin down the central armies of the Western Front (33rd, 43rd, 49th and 50th) and prevent them from reaching the city of Vyazma and the Dnieper River - this is the task that the German troops performed in the area of the city of Yukhnov.

The struggle for this area was the most stubborn on the entire sector of the Western Front. Initial attempts by the 43rd, 49th, and 50th armies to capture the area were unsuccessful and limited to small tactical successes. The divisions of the 33rd Army and the group of General Belov, who broke through to Vyazma, could not influence the Yukhnov grouping of the enemy from the rear, since by this time they were engaged in protracted battles with the Germans on the entire front.

The need was identified to involve new units in the fight in this area, with the help of which it would be possible to violate the enemy front from the rear and thereby enable the central armies to move forward and complete the encirclement of the Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping. For this purpose, the front command planned to throw out the 4th Airborne Corps west of the city of Yukhnov, which was tasked with breaking through the enemy front in the Pesochnya area and reaching Varshavskoe highway (25-30 km southwest of Yukhnov) for a further joint offensive with 50- th army in the rear of the enemy's Yukhnov grouping.



The general situation in the Yekhnov direction by February 25, 1942

of the year

The 4th Airborne Corps operated in the Vyazma-Yekhnov-Yelnya-Dorogobuzh quadrangle. From the north and south, railways and highways, as well as the Vyazma-Kirov railroad, which had a large operational

meaning.

The terrain in the landing area was sharply rugged, with a large number of swamps. In winter, country roads for vehicles were impassable. The movement of body parts in

off-road conditions, through wooded areas, without skis was very difficult. In the

settlements of the area of operations of the corps, in addition to the indigenous people, there were many refugees. The overwhelming majority of the population treated the units of the Red Army sympathetically.

The offensive of the 4th airborne corps on Pesochnya On the night of February 19-20, 1942, the city in the Bol. Elenka, an airborne assault was thrown out as part of the 8th (1350 people) and 214th (2239 people) airborne brigades, which were part of the 4th airborne corps. The landing of the landing was not entirely successful - some of the paratroopers were thrown at a great distance from the designated area or in the forests. This led to the fact that the collection of the entire landing force took more time than planned. During February 20-21, the landing united, collected property

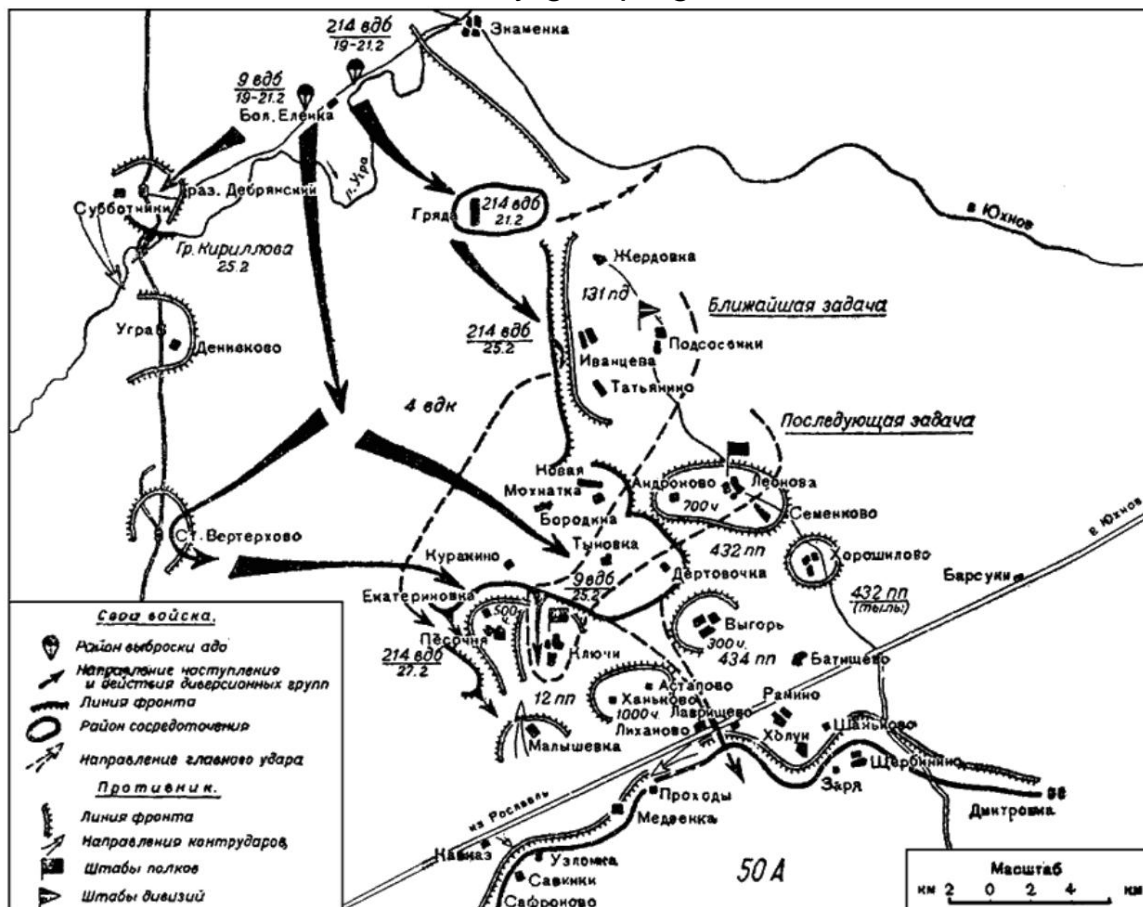
and conducted reconnaissance of the enemy. On the night of February 21, the 214th Airborne Brigade concentrated in the Gryad area, and the 9th Airborne Brigade, having been somewhat delayed in collecting its people, continued to concentrate in the drop area. The final collection of the landing was completed by the end of February 23. Taking advantage of the delay in the landing, the enemy

reinforced some of his garrisons in populated areas and fortified some of them. Around the settlements there were ice trenches, some buildings were adapted as a bunker. The approaches to individual settlements were mined and cut with wire fences of 2-3 stakes. The garrisons of the enemy troops located in the area of operations of the 4th airborne corps had tanks and heavy guns.

The area of landing and landing operations was subjected to combat influence from enemy aircraft.

The corps had the immediate task of capturing the borders of Kurakino, Borodino, Podsozonka; in the future, he was supposed to reach the line of Klyuchi, Tynovka, Leonov in order to connect with the troops of the 50th Army for further operations against the Yukhnovskaya enemy grouping. The general direction of the offensive of the corps coincided with the direction of the 50th Army, which on February 23 began

an offensive towards the corps with the task of capturing the area of Batishchevo, Vygor, Klyuchi, Pesochnya, Kavkaz, from where it was to advance together with the 4th airborne corps in the direction of Barsuka, to the rear of the Yukhnov enemy grouping.



The offensive of the 4th Airborne Corps on Pesochnya from 25 to February 28, 1942

On the night of February 24, the corps went on the offensive, as a result of which, having inflicted heavy losses on the enemy and losing 280 people, by the end of the day reached the line: 9th Airborne Brigade - Klyuchi, Dertovochka; 214th Airborne Brigade - Tatyano, Ivantseva, Zherdovka. On the same day, units of the 9th Airborne Brigade captured the Debryansky junction, the village of Subbotniki and the Verterkhovo station, where a small amount of ammunition and weapons were captured. Parts of the corps destroyed the German garrison of 80 people at the Werterhovo station.

With reaching the indicated line, the following nature of the enemy's actions was determined: against the right flank of the corps, the Ekaterinovka, Pesochnya area was most strongly fortified; in the center, in the direction of Dertovochka, the positions of the Germans were weaker fortified and, finally, against the left flank - the Tatyano, Ivantsev, Zherdovka line was fortified no less strongly than the Pesochnya area.

Thus, from the very first day of operations, the corps met with the organized defense of the Germans on the entire front of the offensive. It should be noted that in the very first battle the 9th Airborne Brigade showed itself from the best side, parts of which resolutely and boldly entered into battle with the enemy. The 214th Airborne Brigade, despite the fact that it had prepared for the offensive earlier, did not achieve much success and stopped in indecision, stumbling into the enemy's defenses. This was reflected in her further military operations. The corps commander assumed that with a combined strike of two brigades from the Novaya, Mokhnatka

area, he would be able to cut the highway in the Likhanovo-Lavrishchevo sector and link up with units of the 50th Army in the coming days. However, the very first day of fighting put

doubt the possibility of carrying out this plan.

A significant drawback of the first day of the offensive was that the corps commander was unable to establish contact with the commander of the 50th Army that day. The latter, in turn, also did not have the opportunity to coordinate the actions of his troops with the actions of the 4th Airborne Corps. The enemy, having determined the offensive of significant groupings from the northwest and southeast, immediately began to pull up reserves into this area, and the strongest of them were directed against the 50th Army, which went on the offensive on February 23. In this regard, the corps commander faced the prospect of a long struggle in this sector. Intelligence clarified that in the areas of Yekaterinovka, Pesochnya, Klyuchi, up to 500 enemy soldiers and

officers were defending; in Khankovo, Astapovo - up to 1000 people; in Vygor - up to 300 people (434th Infantry Regiment) and in Semenkovo, Leonovo, Andronovo - up to 700 people. All these settlements were strongholds of the Germans, which were part of the system of resistance nodes Pesochnya, Leonov and Podsosonka. In total, the corps had in front of it at least two infantry

enemy regiments. These regiments occupied pre-fortified positions, were reinforced by artillery and supported by bomber aircraft. On February 26, fighting continued at the

previous lines, and only on February 27 did units of the 9th Airborne Brigade manage to capture Klyuchi, where about 600 German soldiers and officers were destroyed. Here the 12th Infantry Regiment and its headquarters were completely destroyed, various trophies were captured.

By this time, parts of the corps began to feel the need for food and ammunition: their small reserves, stretched for 8 days, were depleted. The lack of ammunition and artillery in the corps made it impossible to develop success, and until March 1, its brigades remained at their former lines. The troops of the 50th Army also had no success, continuing to fight for the Warsaw highway. Having established contact with the

commander of the 50th Army, the corps commander on the night of March 1 tried to break through the German defenses again - but the latter, turning to active operations, pulled up part of the artillery from the Varshavskoe highway to the Klyuchi area and, with the support of 6-8 bombers, launched a counteroffensive. Two ski battalions also took part in this offensive on the part of the enemy. The corps commander, having determined the intentions of the enemy, transferred part of the forces of the 214th airborne brigade (600 people) to his right flank. Since February 27, this group has blocked the Ekaterinovka, Pesochnya area, thereby facilitating the position of the 9th airborne brigade, which is holding the Klyuchi area with difficulty.

As a result of the fighting on February 25-28, units of the corps reached the line indicated by the command, but the attempt to break through the Varshavskoe highway to join the 50th Army was not successful. One of the reasons for this is the failure in the offensive operations of the 50th Army, units of which failed to capture the points indicated by the command of the Western Front and did not break through the Warsaw highway. In the battles of

this period, the corps suffered significant losses - 1200 a person, or 25% of the composition, which was at the beginning of the offensive.

On March 1, the Germans launched a decisive counteroffensive, delivering the main blow in the direction of Klyuchi. Parts of the corps were forced

go on the defensive and stubbornly held this point, suffering heavy losses.
The

main shortcomings in the actions of the 4th airborne cases at this stage should be considered:

1. An excessively long time spent on collecting the 4th Airborne Corps after landing, due to the large dispersion of personnel during landing (up to 40 km), which made it possible for the enemy to prepare defenses, deprive our landing force of surprise, thereby making it difficult to complete the assigned tasks.

2. The weak organization of ground reconnaissance on the eve of the transition of the corps to the offensive, as a result of which the enemy defense system and its weak points were revealed only after the transition to the offensive, which could not but affect the grouping of the

- corps' forces. 3. The absence of a clearly defined direction of the main attack in the actions of the corps; dispersion of efforts in divergent directions (Klyuchi and Podsosonki), and in the direction of the main efforts of the corps, due to the combat order of the front (Klyuchi), fewer forces were allocated (9th airborne brigade) than in the supporting direction (214th airborne landing brigade).

All these major shortcomings taken together could not but affect the entire subsequent course of the operation of the 4th Airborne Corps.

In addition to the shortcomings in combat operations and in the command and control of the airborne corps, a very significant drawback was the lack of full interaction and coordination of the efforts of the units of the 50th Army and the landing force.

Defensive battles in March 1942 By the

first days of March, it was established that the headquarters of the German 131st Infantry Division was located in Podsosonki. This division, as it turned out later, had the task of destroying our landing troops operating north of the Warsaw highway. The offensive of this division on Klyuchi on March 1 was repulsed by the 9th Airborne Brigade, and units of the 214th Airborne Brigade even managed to advance somewhat to the east, capturing Gorbachi, Tynovka, Yurkino, Andronovo. At this turn, the corps fought until the end of March 4.

On March 5, up to two companies of Germans, supported by heavy artillery and two mortar batteries, launched an attack on Tynovka in order to cut the front of the corps and reach its rear. At the same time, the enemy attacked Yurkino and Andronovo. The combat composition of the corps at this time was as follows:

Command staff 843
enlisted **personnel**
1641 Total 2484

Small arms rifles 1276
PPSh 707
pistols
376 light
machine guns 126 anti-
tank guns 39
Mortars 50
mm 22
82 mm
16 Radios 15

This composition allowed the corps commander not only to hold the front with a length of 35 km, but also to simultaneously conduct sabotage operations on the flanks and behind enemy lines. These actions were expressed in the mining of roads (a section of the Leonova-Aleksandrovka road, in the direction of German patrols) or in organizing ambushes. Usually these actions had positive results.

On March 6, parts of the corps tried to conduct an offensive in the direction of Pesochnya, Malyshevka, Grachevka. The 214th Airborne Brigade advanced on Pesochnya, the 9th Airborne Brigade fought for Malyshevka with two battalions, and held Klyuchi and Gorbachi with one battalion. This offensive, due to heavy mortar and machine-gun fire from Malyshevka, was not successful. The Germans, in response to the offensive of our units by a group of 200 people, launched a counterattack on the village of Dertovochka and attacked Tynovka, but by joint counterattacks of the units of both brigades they were driven back, losing 52 people killed, 9 light machine guns, 7 machine guns, 43

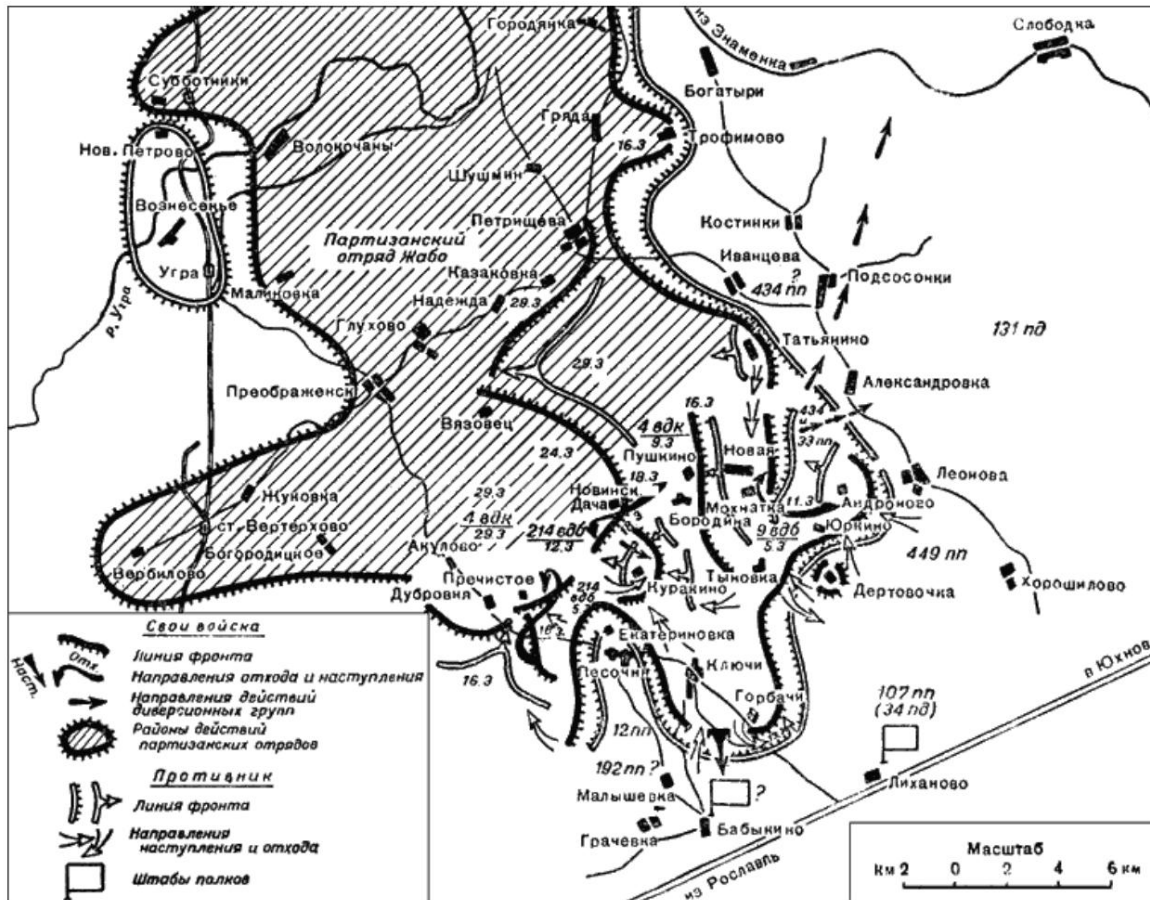
rifles, 4 pistols and 7000 rifle cartridges (of which 50% are explosive). The protracted

battles on this line put the corps in a difficult situation: without the presence of its own rear, the issues of supply and evacuation became acute. Although by this time the supply of units and the evacuation of the wounded by means of transport aircraft had been established, however, this measure did not fully cover the needs of the corps. The command of the corps, as well as the command of our other units operating behind enemy lines, had to resort to the help of partisans; one of the large partisan detachments under the command of [Jabot\[174\]](#) operated in the rear and on the left flank of the corps. The strong connection that the corps had established with this detachment justified itself in the future, when the German offensive in this sector assumed even wider proportions.

On March 7-8, the Germans launched several more attacks in the direction of Leonovo, Andronovo, but all these attacks were repulsed. The reflection of the constant attacks of the Germans cost the corps significant losses; however, the Germans also suffered heavy losses, especially in the area of Ekaterinovka, Pesochnya.

From March 10, German attacks intensified. On March 11, up to two companies of the enemy, with the support of artillery, a large number of mortars and machine guns, overcoming the resistance of two reinforced platoons of the 9th Airborne Brigade, captured Andronovo and Yurkino. Further efforts of the Germans were aimed at capturing the Novaya, Mokhnatka region, which was of particular importance for the corps, since it was central in the corps' zone of operations.

By this time, tanks began to appear from the enemy side. Lacking sufficient anti-tank weapons, the paratroopers still fought against enemy tanks. So, during the repulse of attacks by a German battalion with three tanks on Novaya, Mokhnatka and a battalion with two tanks on Gorbachi, armor-piercers managed to knock out one enemy tank (in these battles, up to 200 Germans were destroyed and 6 people were taken prisoner).



Defensive battles of the 4th Airborne Corps in March 1942

By the end of March 12, the corps, repelling enemy attacks on Tynovka, Mokhnatka, Tatyano, occupied the following position: the consolidated detachment of the 214th airborne brigade defended Dubrovnya, Prechistoye, Kurakino, continuing to block Yekaterinovka, Pesochnya with two companies. Units of the 12th Infantry Regiment acted in front of the detachment; The 9th Airborne Brigade defended Klyuchi, Gorbachi and Tynovka, intercepting the Pesochnya-Malyshevka road with one company; in front of the brigade were units of the 142nd and 442nd infantry regiments; The 214th airborne brigade held the areas of Mokhnatka and Novaya with all-round defense, repelling the attacks of the 434th and 33rd infantry regiments of the enemy.

The main grouping of the enemy's 131st Infantry Division by the same time was concentrating in the area of Podsosonka, Kostinka, Ivantsev, Leonov, Khoroshilovo - apparently with the aim of further offensive in the direction of Novaya, Verterkhovo station. This division, in

due to heavy losses, in their companies consisted of 40-50 people. Apparently, in order to strengthen it, the 449th Infantry Regiment, which operated in the Dertovochka, Aleksandrovka area, was attached to it. In this position,

the parties were until March 18, fighting with varying success. As a result of these battles, the composition of the corps was gradually reduced, while from the side of the enemy more and more new units appeared. On March 15, the corps had:

- Command staff 665
- Enlisted personnel
- 1336 Total people
- 2001 Rifles
- 1023
- PPSh 646 Light
- machine guns 74 Anti-tank
- rifles 13 45 mm
- guns 6
- Radio sets
- 8 Mortars
- 50 mm 18 82 m 31

From the side of the enemy, by the same time, the appearance of the 107th infantry regiment of the 34th infantry division, whose headquarters was in Likhanovo, was discovered. According to the testimony of the prisoners, the regiment was specially transferred from the Yukhnov region to reinforce the units advancing against the 4th Airborne Corps.

By this time, relying on the Slobodka-Znamenka highway, the Germans had created a line of obstacles and fortifications in front of the front of the corps, consisting of minefields, snow ditches, ramparts and bunkers. In addition, they used searchlights, anti-aircraft machine guns, field guns, tanks - that is, such means that the 4th Airborne Corps was deprived of, on March 18, large German forces with tanks and artillery attacked Pushkino and after street fighting took possession of it. The 4th battalion of the 214th airborne brigade, defending this point, left it only when only 30 people remained in the battalion.

At the same time, the enemy attacked Borodin, which was hardly held by parts of the corps, as well as Tynovka, Gorbachi and Klyuchi. On this day, the enemy advanced units penetrated west of Kurakino, where he was stopped. This time the Germans failed to develop their offensive further.

By March 20, the 4th Airborne Corps was defending in the following positions: 214th Airborne Brigade - Dubrovnya, Prechistoye (suit); 9th Airborne Brigade - Prechistoye, Kurakino, Novinskaya Dacha. As part of the corps by this time, only there was:

- Command staff 535
- Enlisted personnel
- 948 Total people
- 1483 Rifles
- 718 Anti-tank rifles 15 Light
- machine guns and PPSH 577 45
- mm guns 4 50
- mm mortars
- 8 82
- mm 10

Apparently, the offensive on March 18 cost the Germans a lot: until March 23, they did not show activity on the corps front, and only on the 24th they tried to advance in the Kurakino area, but were repulsed with heavy losses for them. The brigades firmly held the line of Akulovo, Dubrovnya, Prechistoye, Kurakino, Novinskaya Dacha, Vyazovets. This provision remained unchanged until the end of March.

On March 31, up to three German battalions, supported by a significant amount of artillery, tanks and aircraft, having lost four wrecked tanks in battle, captured the villages of Dubrovnya, Prechistoye and Kurakino. Parts of the airborne corps, having suffered heavy losses, including the loss of the available anti-tank artillery, were forced to withdraw. There was a threat of enemy penetration in the direction of the Verterkhovo and Ugra stations, where a German group of about 800 people was surrounded by partisans.

Apparently, the German command decided to deliver the final blow to our landing force and, by entering the area of these stations, secure the entire territory occupied by the 4th airborne corps and partisans for the unhindered withdrawal of the main forces of their Yekhnov grouping to the southwest (in the area the cities of Yekhnov at that time were conducting successful offensive battles of the 43rd and 49th armies). However, the further advance of the Germans was again delayed by the 4th Airborne Corps at the turn of Akulovo, Novinskaya Dacha.

Thus, the March stubborn defensive battles of the corps ended in total in his favor. Parts of two German divisions (34th and 131st) could not break the stubbornness of the paratroopers, equal in number to the reinforced battalion, and were forced to be content with the small successes they achieved in separate areas. A month of struggle cost the enemy dearly; both of these divisions, suffering losses, did not solve the tasks set by the German command. The landing force continued to exist, still inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. However, his situation became more and more serious every day, especially since the goals set for the corps had not yet been fulfilled.

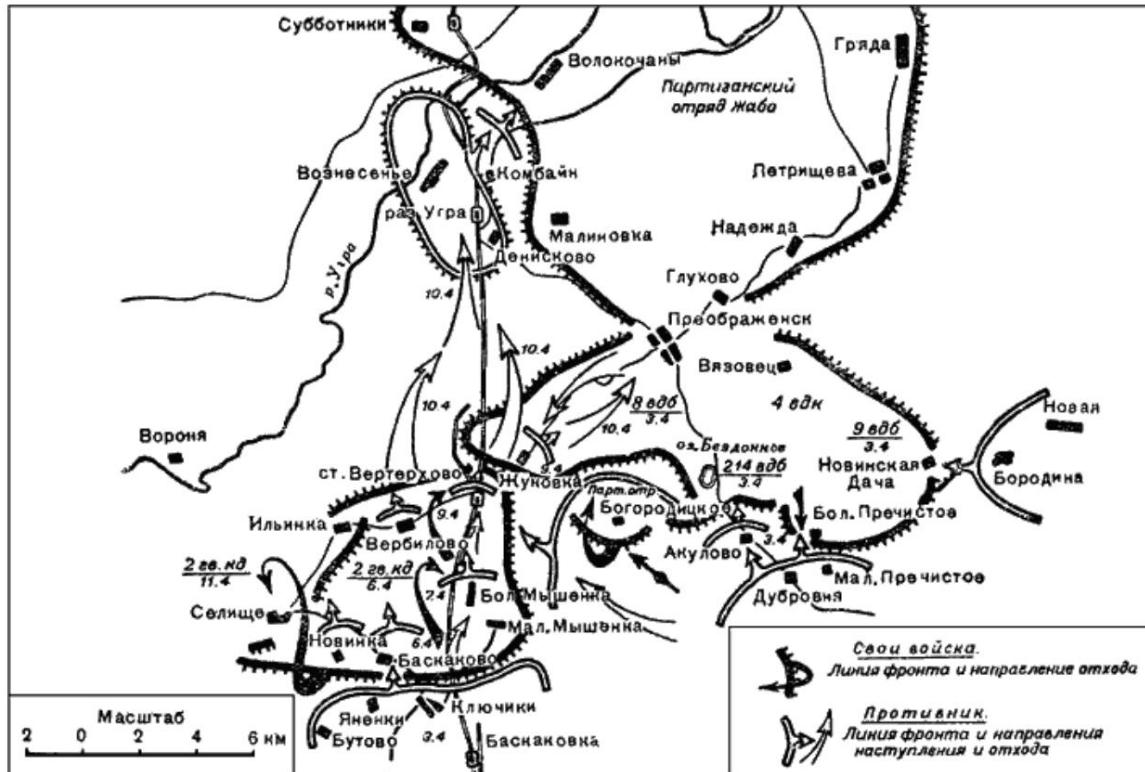
German breakthrough in the direction of the Verterkhovo

station and the Ugra junction On April 2, units of the enemy's 131st Infantry Division continued their offensive from the Novaya and Borodina directions, delivering the main blow to Novinskaya Dacha and from the Dubrovnya, Mal. Pure on Akulovo. Despite significant losses, the enemy managed to push back parts of the corps somewhat, and a group of five tanks broke into Bogoroditskoye, dispersed the partisans who were there and secured this point for themselves.

Under such conditions, the corps had to either leave the occupied area and, in order to save manpower, retreat behind the railway in a northwestern direction to join General Belov's group, or remain in the occupied area, waiting for reinforcements to arrive. Despite the difficult conditions, the final decision was made. Having sent part of the forces to restore the situation to Bogoroditskoye and having joined his right flank to the area of the Ugra station, the corps commander decided to defend himself to the last opportunity.

From the morning of April 3, the enemy continued to persistently attack Akulovo. The divisions waged an unequal struggle, showing examples of heroism. So, the platoon of Comrade Sakhanchik, repelling the attack of 150 Germans, supported by five tanks, destroyed 2 tanks and a large number of enemy infantry in a stubborn battle. However, with a small number of anti-tank rifles and cartridges for them, the fight against enemy tanks became more and more difficult.

The right flank of the corps was the most poorly protected. To top it off, there was almost no food in the units. On the same day, the remnants of the 8th airborne brigade, which had previously operated as part of the group of General Belov, arrived to reinforce the corps. This brigade took up defense in the area of Preobrazhensk, Zhukovka, thus covering the corps from the side of the railway.



The situation at the front of the 4th Airborne Corps on April 3, 1942

On the night of April 3-4, the Germans, after heavy artillery and mortar preparation and with the support of six tanks, captured the village of Akulovo, losing up to 300 soldiers killed and 4 tanks.

The 214th Airborne Brigade, which repulsed this attack, lost 150 men killed and wounded.

At the same time, on another sector of the front, the 9th Airborne Brigade, with a successful counterattack, drove the Germans out of Prechisty, destroyed 34 soldiers there, captured 1 heavy and 6 light machine guns, 24 rifles, 2 pistols and 1 wrecked German tank.

As a result of the fighting, by the morning of April 4, the 214th airborne brigade was entrenched in the forest northwest and north of Akulovo; 9th Airborne Brigade - in the village of Prechistoye, Novinskaya Dacha, Vyazovets. The Jabot partisan detachment held the former area; The Germans did not show much activity in his sector. A different situation was created in the railway

area south of the Werterhovo station. Here, from the first days of April, the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division operated, which defended itself in Selishche, Mal. Mouse, station Verterhovo. In this area, in the following days, events played out that put the corps in a position in which it found itself in a semi-encirclement. As early as April 3, the Germans, having launched an offensive in a northern direction, successively captured Klyuchiki, Yanenki, Butovo, and by April 6 they captured the villages of Novinka, Baskakovo, Bol. and Mal. Mouse. The main enemy attack was indicated along the railway, at the junction of the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division and the 4th Airborne Corps.

There is no doubt that the abandonment by the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division of the Verterkhovo station area could have entailed the further spread of the enemy in the direction of the Ugra junction, where enemy units surrounded by partisans were located. Apparently, the German offensive in the Bogoroditskoye area had a direct connection with their actions along the railway, since the directions of their attacks converged in one direction - at the Werterkhovo station. The situation developed in such a way that on April 9 the Germans managed to capture the Werterkhovo station, throwing parts of the airborne corps to the east, and the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division to the west, thereby securing freedom of action in the direction of the Ugra junction.

At the same time, having captured the Zhukovka area (where a company of partisans defended) on the corps site, on April 10, the Germans, with a force of up to 500 people, supported by 3 tanks, launched an offensive: from the Verbilovo area to the Ugra junction; from Zhukovka and Verterkhovo to Preobrazhensk and part of the forces

along the railway to Deniskovo. The attack on Preobrazhensk was repulsed by units of the 8th Airborne Brigade, but by the end of the day the enemy managed to capture Deniskovo and the Ugra junction, where he joined up with his encircled grouping. Partisans from these areas were pushed back to the northeast. After occupying

the Ugra junction, the Germans began to spread to the east and northeast, developing an offensive against Malinovka, pushing back the partisans from the Combine

area. To allow the enemy to penetrate even further north meant to give him the opportunity to further connect with his Vyazma grouping. This threatened the complete disengagement of the 4th Airborne Corps and the Zhabot partisan detachment from the group of General Belov, which operated northwest of the Ugra station. It was necessary to unite the actions of all parts in this direction. To this end, the 4th Airborne Corps was operationally subordinated to General Belov, who was tasked by the front commander to liquidate the enemy grouping that had broken through through the combined efforts of all units and, advancing in the direction of Milyatino, join up with the 50th Army advancing in the direction of this point.

The attack on Milyatino As

a result of the counterattacks undertaken by our troops, the Germans left the Ugra, Voznesenye, Deniskovo junction by April 12 and retreated to the south - partly by forests, partly directly along the railway. These points were occupied by partisans of the Zhabot detachment, and the Voznesenye area was occupied by units of the 329th Infantry Division, which operated as part of the group of General Belov. Following this, units of the 8th Airborne Brigade captured Zhukovka and the Verterkhovo station.

By April 13, the corps occupied the following position: the 8th airborne brigade was fixed at the Verterkhovo station, in Zhukovka and Preobrazhensk, in readiness to attack Terekhovka; 214th Airborne Brigade - in the area of the embankment near Lake Bezdonnoye; The 9th Airborne Brigade was still defending the line Prechistoye, Novinskaya Dacha. On the night of April 14, units of the 214th airborne brigade occupied Bogoroditskoye and Platonovka.

On April 14, the Germans continued to hold Dubrovnia and Mal. Mouse, leading a strong artillery fire on the battle formations of the corps. The 8th and 9th airborne brigades, which received the task of advancing in the general direction of Milyatino, were making forest roads: the first - in order to reach the area of Baskakovka station, the second - to the area of \u200b\u200bthe village of Buda. The 2nd Guards Cavalry Division, bypassing the enemy's resistance centers, was supposed to go to the

Fanerzavod area. At 6 o'clock on April 15, the 8th and 9th airborne brigades jointly captured the village of Buda, in the area of which they continued to wage heavy battles with the enemy. By the beginning of these battles, the corps received reinforcements in the form of two battalions of paratroopers (from April 15 to April 18, 559 people were gathered in the

By 4 p.m. on April 18, the Germans reoccupied Buda, pushing parts of the corps to the northeast. In the battles for this point, they lost about 400 killed and up to 600 wounded. The settlement itself was burned by our troops before leaving, and the sawmill, which had defensive significance, was destroyed. In these battles, the brigades captured three warehouses (including food), fodder, 129 horses, 400 wagons, 185 rifles, 12 light and 4 heavy machine guns; 5 enemy soldiers were taken prisoner. After leaving Buda, parts of the corps

tried to advance southeast, in the directions of Nov. Askerovo and Askerovo station, but it turned out that the area of these points was heavily fortified, so the repeated attacks of the brigades during April 21-23 were not successful. Parts, due to the lack of artillery, could not overcome the resistance of the enemy and were forced to remain at their former lines. By this time, the combat composition of the corps, together with the

received
replenishment (two battalions) was as follows:

Части	Командный состав	Рядовой и мл. командный состав	Всего людей
8-я воздушно-десантная бригада	132	619	751
9-я воздушно-десантная бригада	110	557	667
214-я воздушно-десантная бригада	65	110	175
Управление корпуса	62	372	434
Всего	369	1658	2027

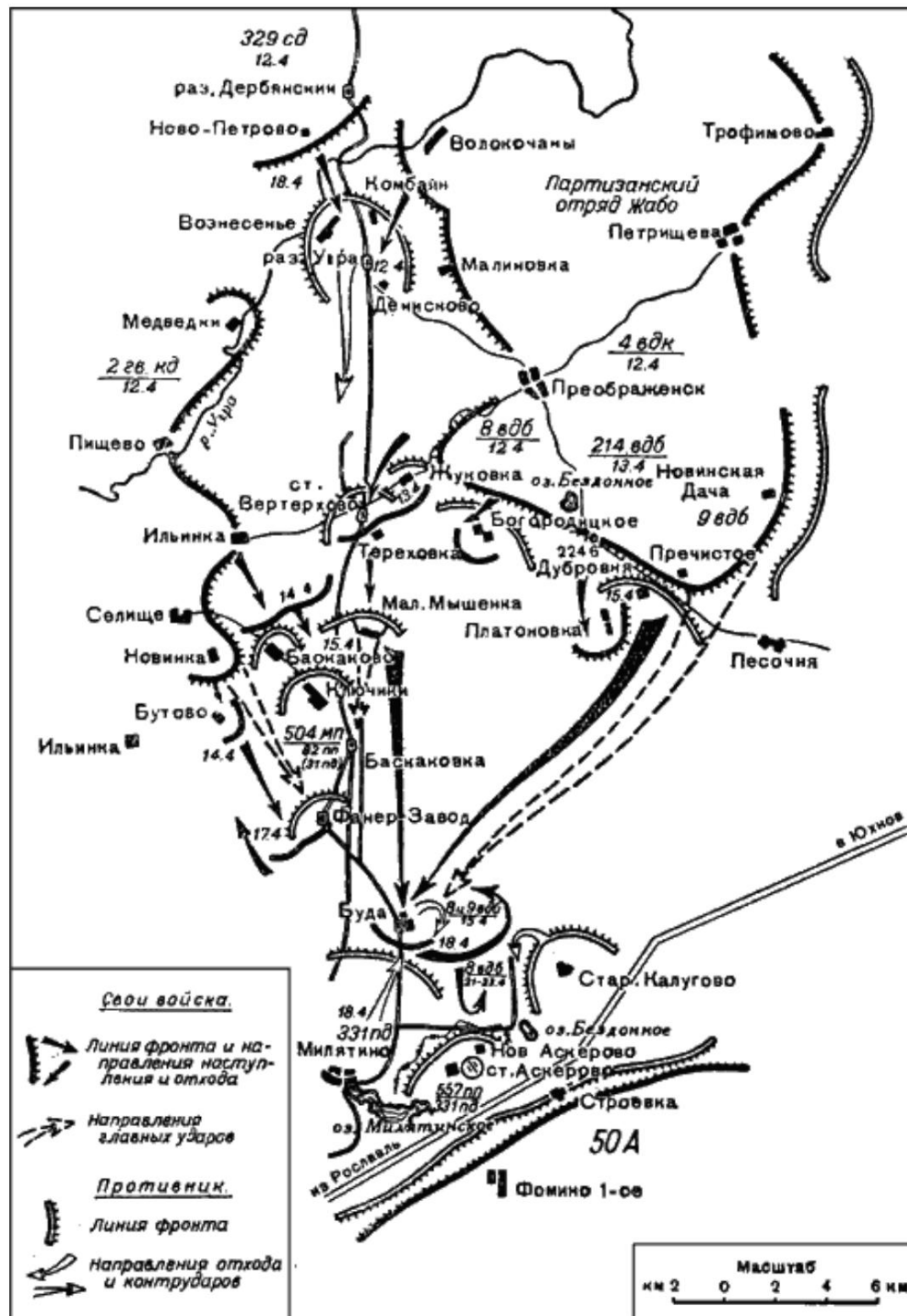
Such a composition of the corps could only provide a relatively strong cover for the occupied area; it was risky to undertake active operations, especially since the units of the 50th Army, which were much stronger in composition, advancing on Milyatino from the south, also had no success. The Germans organized a series of

counterattacks from the settlements of Buda and Star. Kalugovo, but their attacks were invariably repulsed by parts of the corps.

The advancing thaw, and after it the flood, put parts of the hull in difficult conditions. They were forced to fight in a relatively open area in front of the enemy's fortified positions. The soldiers of the brigades often fought in melted swamps, waist-deep in water, in an exceptionally difficult situation with allowances and ammunition (delivery was made only by hand - weather conditions did not allow delivery). The bases of the corps were left far behind.

By decision of the command, parts of the corps were withdrawn to the former area and by April 26 they took up defense: the 8th airborne brigade - in the area of the station Verterkhovo and Terekhovka; 9th Airborne Brigade - Bogoroditskoye; The 214th Airborne Brigade continued to cover the corps from the east at the line of Dubrovnya, Prechistoye, Novinskaya Dacha. Subversive groups were sent to the Baskakovka-Buda and Dubrovnya-Pesochnya roads.

The Germans, having established the retreat of parts of the corps, followed them to the north and, having occupied the villages of Mal. Myshenka and Dubrovnya began to strengthen them, still holding in their hands the points east of the line Trofimovo, Novinskaya Dacha.



Attack on Milyatino from 12 to 20 April

Thus, the attack on Milyatino ended in vain - both sides were mostly on the same lines.

Fighting in the encirclement and exit from

the encirclement In the first half of May, the Germans continued to fortify the village of Mal. Mouse, Dubrovnya, Mal. Prechistoe, Kurakino, Borodino, Ivantsevo, while concentrating infantry, tanks and transports in Bogatyri, Znamenka, Veshki, Mikhali. Apparently, the enemy was regrouping, preparing for a new offensive. It was established by reconnaissance and a survey of prisoners that there were up to 200 infantry and 2 tanks in Bogatyri; in Znamenka - up to 100 people and 12 tanks; in Veshki - 600-800 people. In early May, after unsuccessful attempts by

the 8th airborne brigade to attack Mal. Mouse, the corps continued to defend the line (suit.) Verbilovo, Bol. Myshenka, Bogoroditskoye, Platonovka, Akulovo, having barriers in the Camp, Baraki, Plotki area. The Jabot partisan detachment held a front stretching 35 km. The combat composition of the corps at this time was as follows:

People 2035

Active fighters 1565

Rifles 624

Light machine guns and machine
guns 507

Mortars

30 anti-tank rifles 38

Heavy

machine guns 6 anti-tank guns 3 Field guns 0

With such a weak composition, the corps, together with the Jabot partisan detachment, had to defend the front with a length of 70 km (there were about 1,400 people in the Jabot detachment). But since the Germans did not show much activity, this defense was still a relatively reliable cover for the entire area occupied by the corps.

The weakest in terms of resistance was the Jabot detachment, so the corps commander, due to the concentration of the enemy in the Bogatyr area, Znamenka reinforced it with one infantry battalion formed from the retreating units of the 33rd Army and, in addition, somewhat reduced the front of the detachment by increasing the front of the corps (to the Ivantsevo area). At the same time, the corps produced a number of

works of economic and sanitary order: evacuation of the wounded, removal of parachutes and others.

By May 21, it became known that the enemy was grouping significant forces in the Milyatino area, where up to 3,000 infantry, artillery, and a large headquarters were noted. Thus, in the second half of May, two main enemy groupings were identified: in the north in the area of Bogatyri, Znamenka, Mikhali and in the south - in Milyatino. It was clear that both of these groups would try to deliver a double blow against the corps. On May 25, the

enemy went on the offensive, delivering the main blows in the directions of Mikhali, Znamenka - at the Ugra junction and from Milyatino, against the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division - at Vskhody. Successful enemy actions in these directions gave him the opportunity to completely surround the corps in the area occupied. The

strength of the advancing enemy was assessed by the corps commander as follows: in the direction of Mikhaly, Beldyugino and Znamenka, Zhelanye, at least one infantry division, reinforced with tanks and aircraft, was advancing. As a result of the offensive of this grouping, the Jabot detachment was forced to drastically reduce its front and, by the end of May 25, withdraw to the Nadezhda, Kamenka, Anikonovo, Praskovka, Combine line. All other points to the north and east were occupied by the enemy. The Jabot detachment lost up to 60% of its composition in the battles that day. From the south, directly against the corps, up to an infantry regiment with 20 tanks, supported by artillery and aircraft, advanced, which forced parts of the corps to leave Bol with losses of

15-20% of the people. Mouse. Developing the offensive, the enemy occupied Vasilievka and Kamenka by the end of the day, wedged into the location of the Jabot detachment. During the day of the battle, the Germans suffered

At the same time, up to two regiments of German infantry with tanks launched an offensive against the 2nd Guards Cavalry Division and, having captured Selishche and Vskhody, tried to force the Ugra River in a northern

direction. As a result of the first day of the offensive, a critical situation arose - the corps was really threatened by encirclement and further destruction by superior German forces. It was impossible to contain the offensive of such forces. Asked for an exit -

withdraw the remaining manpower from the encirclement to new areas where it could be used for further struggle under more favorable conditions. Therefore, by decision of the command, the corps was ordered to leave the battle in a westerly direction in order to join the Belov group.

Waging defensive battles, groups of the corps and the Zhabot detachment on May 26 began to retreat in the direction of Selibka, where a crossing was planned across the Ugra River. From the moment the withdrawal began, the connection between the corps commander and Jabot's detachment was lost. On May 27, units began to approach the Ugra River, but due to the flood of the river, the crossing turned out to be difficult, since there were no crossing facilities in the corps. Under the continuous influence of enemy aircraft, incurring heavy losses, parts of the corps, with the help of improvised means, that day, with their main forces, were still able to cross to the western bank of the river. By this time, the Germans had completely occupied the eastern bank of the Ugra and the villages of Medvedki, Selibka, Chaschi. After the crossing, the corps concentrated in the forest south of the Gorodota River (1.5 km south of the settlements of Selibka and Chaschi). Being in a small forest area, the corps was completely surrounded by superior enemy forces, interacting with tanks, aircraft and artillery.

In view of the complete impossibility of breaking through in the direction of Fursovo, the corps commander decided, taking advantage of the darkness, on the night of May 26-27, 1942, to break through to the west between the settlements of Selibka and Chaschi, to get involved in forests and then go out in the direction of Pustoshka. By this time, communication with the front and the group of General Belov was temporarily lost. By dawn on May 27,

the corps broke through the encirclement and concentrated in the forest 2 km west of Chasha, and by 10 pm on May 28, 1942, parts of the corps concentrated in the forest 1 km north of Shchadrino.

The enemy, having discovered the movement of the corps to the west, once again made an attempt to destroy the landing force. The corps commander, after careful reconnaissance and assessment of the situation, taking into account the need to conduct a forest battle at night, ordered:

“To the commander of the 8th airborne brigade with one battalion to break through the enemy front in the Aleksino area. The rest of the corps, following the battalion of the 8th airborne brigade, lined up in a column close to each other,

putting forward and on the flanks of machine gunners, break through in the direction of movement of the lead shock battalion.

After an hour-long battle, the breakthrough was made. This breakthrough method gave positive results; control was maintained to the end, the collection of units after the breakthrough and their further actions were facilitated.

By May 30, 1942, waging a continuous battle, the corps entered the area of operations of units of the group of General Belov.

Conclusions The experience of the three-month battles of the 4th Airborne Corps allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. The established view of the use of airborne units as a branch of service intended for short-term active operations, followed by connection with friendly troops, is not always correct. In the conditions of modern warfare, it must be borne in mind that airborne assault forces will very often be forced to fight protracted battles of various types - offensive, defensive, or in special conditions. This makes it necessary to determine in advance the nature of the upcoming combat missions of the landing force.

2. Since the airborne assault will be intended for more or less prolonged combat work behind enemy lines, insofar as its equipment must necessarily correspond to the nature of the tasks ahead. In particular, the conduct of offensive battles will be associated with the need to have a certain amount of artillery, even if of small caliber; defensive battles must be provided with sufficient anti-tank weapons and even minimally sized special obstacles (portable in transportation), as well as explosives. If it is possible to throw at least a small group of tanks into the landing area (by making a breakthrough in the most vulnerable sector of the enemy front), then the striking force of the landing will be much higher. In all cases, one should take into account the need to saturate the landing forces with as many strike weapons as possible, otherwise they

turn out to be too light and do not have the ability to solve active tasks, relatively quickly succumbing to the opposition of enemy ground forces.

3. The issue of regular long-term supply of landing forces with ammunition and food is particularly acute. It is impossible to count on the uninterrupted operation of our transport aviation in the presence of a strong enemy air defense.

The resolution of questions of food and supplies is directly dependent on the nature of the enemy's actions. In the presence of a weakly stable enemy, in some cases it will inevitably be necessary to supply at his expense - by organizing raids on warehouses, convoys or bases. However, the only real means of supply will continue to be the use of transport aircraft, the need for which will be determined in each individual case by the size of the landing detachment.

When supplying means of transport aviation, it is necessary to take into account the probability of its loss, as well as the fact that part of the property dropped by parachutes, especially weapons, sometimes becomes unusable, while landing aircraft on the ground is often impossible due to adverse meteorological conditions. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the technique of cargo delivery. In addition, when deliveries by air, an allowance for the inevitable losses of dropped cargo should be taken into account, otherwise, according to the plan, the landing forces will formally receive all, but in essence one or another part of the cargo will not reach them.

4. The landing was not always successful. Some people fell to the enemy or to neighboring units. So, more than 800 paratroopers of the 4th Airborne Corps were mistakenly dropped into the troops of the 33rd Army, and these people could not join the corps in the future due to the fact that parts of the 33rd Army were surrounded. Exceptional accuracy and calculation must be shown in matters of organizing the resupplying of airborne units. Otherwise, the landing units will be in a hopeless situation.

5. A facilitating condition for the operation of landing forces is the presence of partisan areas behind enemy lines. In determining the areas for dropouts, preference should be given to the areas most densely saturated with partisans in order to ensure the productive work of both. It must also be borne in mind that in partisan areas the issues of economic support for landing forces are greatly facilitated, and the need to evacuate the lightly wounded in many cases disappears.

6. Airborne units are a relatively expensive branch of the armed forces, requiring great attention to training and equipment, so the nature of the tasks for them should basically be limited to the shortest possible terms of work. Long-term presence of these detachments in battles without providing them with artillery and tanks does not give positive results and leads, as a rule, to the loss of combat qualities of landing formations. In those cases when, under the conditions of the prevailing situation, only sabotage missions are assigned to the landing detachments, they should not be drawn into long-term battles with enemy ground units.

7. As the experience of long-term combat work of large airborne units has shown, the most advantageous method of landing is landing troops directly on the ground. Parachute drops are extremely expensive, because in the presence of inexperienced navigators, they are often extremely dispersed. Hence the needless losses due to the dropping of subunits into areas occupied by the enemy and the extra waste of time on gathering formations.

Since the appearance of large landings behind enemy lines in most cases cannot remain unnoticed, he will always be able to use this delay in the collection of units to organize appropriate countermeasures aimed at destroying individual groups before the end of the collection. In addition, most parachutes of great value fall into the hands of the enemy or the local population. However, landing on the ground does not preclude the need for preliminary

parachute drops of capture teams (at the rate of approximately a battalion per brigade) so that these groups provide

the planned landing area from the premature appearance of the enemy there. One

or another solution to the issue of landing will be in each individual case depend on the real possibilities of the front.

3. Operation of the 33rd and 43rd armies in the Vyazemsky direction[175]

The situation on the front of the 33rd Army by

01/17/42, the troops of the Western Front continued the offensive along the entire

front. During the day of January 17, **the 33rd Army** fought with its main forces for the city of Vereya. At the same time, part of its forces destroyed the remaining enemy strongholds in the rear.

The 222nd SD with two regiments at 13:00 launched an enemy attack on the northeastern outskirts of the city of Vereya. The third regiment was stopped by enemy fire on the eastern bank of the river. Protva in front of Milyatino.

The 110th SD, having met enemy resistance in Zagryazhskoye, at 12:00 two regiments began to bypass the settlement from the southwest.

The 160th SD is concentrated in Borovsk.

During the day, the **113th SD** with two regiments continued to conduct street battles on the southern outskirts of the city of Vereya. The third regiment after a stubborn battle at 15:30 captured the strongholds of the enemy Vasilyevo, Kolodezi.

1st Guards The SD continued to fight for the capture of the northwestern part of the city of

Vereya. To eliminate the enemy at the turn of Sotnikovo, Panovo and to provide supply routes, a detachment of 200 people was allocated from the division. and 4 tanks.

The 338th SD from 11:00 fought with the enemy in the Panovo, Gorki area.

The 98th SD during the day fought with the enemy in the Makarovo area, Rubtsovo, Kryukovo, Nikolaevka, pushing him to the north.

OPERATING REGISTER Front No. 409 of 01/17/41.

On the right, the 5th Army, pursuing the enemy on the right flank, occupied the city of Ruza at 11:30. Parts of the center and left flank [of the army] continued to fight for Mozhaisk, covering it from the north and south.

The left-flank 32nd SD fought in the Borisovo region, capturing one regiment of Yazevo.

On the left, the 43rd Army, having reached the open flank of the enemy, during 17.01 successfully entered its right flank in the direction of Gusevo, Iznoski, Izvol'sk, Yukhnov. The rest of the forces

on the Romanovo front, Ivanishchevo fought a firefight with the enemy who had gone over to the defensive.

The 194th SD, crowding out small groups of the enemy, successfully advanced towards Yukhnov. At 13:00 on 17.01, one regiment approached Izvolsk, the second - took Tetevo, the third - went to Iznoski.

One rifle battalion was left in the Kuzov area to cover the right flank. By January 17, in front of the

front of the 33rd Army, the enemy had: 258, 183, 15, 267 and 98th PD, 20th TD and in the second echelon 292nd PD.

In previous battles, all these divisions were rather badly battered, but not one of them was defeated. Under the cover of strong rearguards and the skillful use of minefields, artificial obstacles and individual tanks, the enemy managed to withdraw the main forces in a fairly organized way from the blows of the 33rd Army units. In some areas, the enemy continued to stubbornly resist, especially near settlements.

The ratio of forces is 1:1, and given that the enemy in this direction had in the second echelon, presumably in the Temkino area, the 292nd Infantry Division, which could be thrown into any threatened place, then the advantage in strength on the front of the 33rd Army was on side of the enemy.

As can be seen from the operational summary for No. 409 dated January 17 on the Western Front, The 33rd Army fought fierce battles for the city of Vereya with all its forces. The neighbor on the right - the 5th Army fought stubborn battles for the city of Mozhaisk. The neighbor on the left - the 43rd Army fought stubborn battles for Kondrovo and only on its right flank did the 194th SD, the combined regiment and the 5th Airborne Forces, encountering slight resistance from individual small enemy groups, quickly move west and by 17.01 reached the Iznoski area , Bulatovo, breaking away from the area of battles of the main forces by 25-35 km. Thus,

a corridor was discovered at the junction of the 33rd and 43rd armies - between Kryukovo, Doshino, 40 km wide, weakly occupied by the enemy. The commander of the Western

Front sends the 33rd Army, which is still fighting stubborn battles for the city of Vereya, into this corridor to advance to

the Vyazma region and in the rear of the Vyazma grouping of the enemy.

His directive dated January 17, No. k/49 reads:

Commander 33. Copy: Commander 5, 43. 1. The

5th army attacks Mozhaisk and takes it without your help. The movement of the 33rd army on Yelnya, as belated, is cancelled.

2. 43rd Army (194th SD), not meeting much resistance the enemy, took possession of Iznoski, Koshnyaki and is advancing on Yukhnov.

3. A very favorable situation was created for the rapid advance of the 33rd Army to the Vyazma region in the rear of the enemy's Vyazemsky grouping. I order: Simultaneously with the liquidation

of the enemy in Vereya, the main forces of the army from the morning of 01/19/42 in forced marches go to the Dubna, Zamytskoye region, having a further task, depending on the situation, to strike at Vyazma, or bypass it from the south-west. Advance units to reach the area of Dubna, Zamytskoe no later than 19.01, the main forces - 20.01.42.

Thus, two tasks were set before the 33rd Army by the directive: **the first** was to eliminate the enemy in the city of Vereya by 19.01 and **the second** was to go to the Dubna, Zamytskoye area from the morning of 19.01 with a further task, depending on the situation, - an attack on Vyazma or in bypass it from the southwest. The second task for such a weak army as the 33rd,

which still continued to wage stubborn battles without any means of reinforcement (not a single tank formation was attached), is set at a depth of 120-130 km. For his part, the commander of the Western Front is not taking any measures to ensure and manage this

important strategic operation.

The 33rd Army does not sharply increase, only later (28.01) the 329th SD from the front reserve is transferred to the army, and on 30.01 - and the 9th Guards. SD (the last one on February 2, 1942 was transferred to the 43rd Army).

The flanks of the army are not provided, the efforts of the neighbors on the left and right are aimed along diverging lines: the 5th army on Gzhatsk, and the 43rd army on Yukhnov and, in fact, the 33rd army rushed into the rear

adversary to chance. From the air, the army does not cover itself, no mobile means of reinforcement are being made, even ski battalions of the army were not given. The rear is also not organized, and when the army is 1–1.5 marches away from the front line, it begins to sharply need food, fodder, ammunition and fuel.

Everything was limited to the bare formulation of a

grandiose task,

divorced from concrete reality. On January 19,

1942, the 33rd Army (222nd and 110th SDs) captured the town of

Vereya. 01/20/42, the 93rd, 338th and 113th SDs - on the march to a new concentration

area. The army began with a delay of a day to carry out directives from the Western Front.

The enemy in the Vereya region was not defeated, withdrew with significant losses in a westerly direction. He was not pursued at the front of the 33rd Army. The frustrated units of the enemy, which could put themselves in order without any influence from the units of the 33rd Army, were left alone. The enemy took advantage of this, put his units in order and

at the line of Orekhovnya, Himiko, Chelishchevo, Ugryumovo, Ivanovskoye junction offered organized resistance to units of the 33rd Army.

The chief of staff of the Western Front, in code No. 26 / op dated 19.01.42, informs the commander-33:

“Your plan for the further actions of the com-front has been approved with the following

amendments: 1. Send the 93rd SD to the Temkino area. Division transfer speed up vehicles.

2. 113th SD - to the Iznoski area.

3. 222nd SD - to the area of Dubna, Ignatievo, Ostroluchie.

4. 160th SD - transfer to your subordination and send to the area Mochalnik, Nekrasovo, Voditskoe.

5. Detain the 110th SD in the city of Vereya in your reserve, where it will be completed.

6. Keep in mind that in the area of Znamenka, Zhelanie, Dobraya our airborne troops - 2000 people - were landed.

7. The success of your actions depends on the speed of maneuver.

As can be seen from this encryption, the front is not going to take an active part in a large and complex operation, which, of course, was beyond the power to carry out the forces and means of only one army. The front limited itself exclusively to correcting the plan of the army's operation on paper and did not take any measures to clarify the enemy, the areas into which the army should enter, to provide its flanks, air cover, etc. The front cares about only one thing - it hurries the army to an indiscriminate, unsecured movement forward. Only one fact deserves attention - that the

commander-33 is informed about the airborne landing in the area south of Vyazma. The commander of the Western Front, in code number

k / 83 dated January 26, informs Efremov, Golubev, Boldin and Belov about the actions of the cavalry group of the Kalinin Front, which entered the area 12 km west of the city of

Vyazma on January 26 and, in this regard, sets them the following tasks:

"1. Commander-33 - to go on a forced march on January 28, 1942 to the area of \u200b\u200bKrasny Kholm, Gredyakino, Podrezov, where to get in touch with the airborne troops of the 4th Airborne Forces and the cavalry of the Kalinin Front.

2. Tov. Belov - to break through the Warsaw highway and, no later than the outcome of 01/29/42, go to the Semlevo area. 3.

Tov. Golubev, Boldin to quickly capture the city of Yukhnov and, leaving part of the forces for the final elimination of the enemy, the main forces to quickly reach the designated areas southwest of the city of Vyazma.

With this order, the commander of the Western Front wants to pass off his desire as reality, and nothing more can be said about it, since it is completely divorced from the concrete, real situation. It does not take into account either the state of their troops, or where they are at a given time, and when they can reach the designated area, or the time of year, or the road network, or the enemy.

On January 26, the troops of the 33rd Army were located: **the 222nd SD** fought for Voditskoye, Rodionovo, Esovtsy; **The 110th SD** fought for Pevnevo, Azarovo, Vodopyanovo; **The 160th SD** fought for Gnilyevo; **the main forces** were concentrated in Bizyaevo.

These divisions had to cover about 100 km in two days in winter conditions on impassable roads and with continuous battles. By this time, the enemy had thrown up fresh units from the Vyazma region, put the battered retreating units in order and put up stubborn resistance in every settlement, especially against the right-flank units of the 33rd Army.

Consequently, under these conditions, the divisions were given the task of achieving an offensive rate of at least 50–60 km per day. The 93rd SD fought for the Ugryumov settlements, again. Gloomy. 113th SD 26.01 was in the area of Vyazishchi, Lushchino. The 338th SD fought in the Voskresenskoye, Mamushi area. These divisions had to cover a distance of 60–80 km in the same period and under the same conditions. This shows how the tasks assigned to the units of the 33rd Army were completed. In fact, none of the divisions did not fulfill the tasks assigned to them.

On January 30, 1942, i.e., two days after the first order was to be executed, the commander of the Western Front, in cipher No. k / 92 dated January 30, 42, gives a new order to the commander of the 33rd Army.

"I order: 1.

The shock group of the army, without delay, advance in the direction of Red Hill, Sokolovo, where to go no later than February 1, 1942. In the

future, interacting with gr. Belova, take control of Vyazma, covering it from the

southwest. 2. Front reserve - 9th Guards. SD, next to the Kukushkino

area, I submit to you. 3. The strike group should be composed of the

113th, 338th, 160th, 329th SD and the 9th Guards. SD. 4. With the forces of the 110th, 222nd, and 93rd SDs, with a quick sweeping strike, defeat the enemy grouping in the Selenka, Ugryumovo,

Shansky Zavod area, after which they advance through Dubna,

Selenki to Vyazma. Keep the 110th SD on a ledge in the Dubna area to secure t

5. To accelerate in every possible way the advance of the 329th Rifle Division and the 9th Guards. SD. The strike group does not stomp in front of a weak enemy screen. You have been given a lot of strength and only from the swiftness of their ultimate success depends.

It's faster for you to leave for the 113th SD, from where you can control the strike group. "

With this order, the commander of the Western Front again puts
The army has two tasks:

1) the strike group of the 33rd Army, consisting of five divisions (113th, 338th, 160th, 329th and 9th Guards Rifle Divisions) - within 1-1.5 days to overcome the distance from 25 km (113th and 338th SD) up to 90 km (9th Guards SD) in the future, in cooperation with the Belov group, capture Vyazma. At this time, Belov's group had just broken through the Varshavskoye Highway and reached the area of Kukolka, Novoye Khoroshilovo (70–90 km southeast of Vyazma). 2) a group of 110th, 222nd and 93rd SDs - to defeat the enemy on a front of 30–35 km in the area of Shansky Zavod, Ugryumovo, Selenki and then advance on Vyazma from the southeast. The gap between the groups is 75–80 km. This gap was not provided by anyone from the north or south, while in the north in the Temkino region and in the south in the Zhelezinka and Moseykovo regions, the enemy concentrated forces in order to deliver a concentrated blow under the base of the shock group of the 33rd Army, which had advanced far to the west .

No countermeasures are being taken. The concern of the commander of the Western Front is to hasten the 33rd Army to a hasty movement "without delay" forward, to the west!

The tasks assigned to the 33rd Army this time were also unjustified and without taking into account the current situation. Therefore, they could not be implemented. This is how it actually happened.

The strike force of the 33rd Army continued to conscientiously carry out the tasks assigned to it, without looking back, at the slightest opportunity, moved forward both day and night.

The enemy intensively bombs it with impunity with aircraft, since the march of the strike group was not covered from the air. The rear and artillery are far behind, the movement is on bad roads and on impassable roads, the troops are straining every effort to quickly enter the designated area. Such a sweeping movement

continued until February 2, 1942, when the enemy pulled up his forces and proceeded to active operations.

The operational situation on the front of the 33rd Army by 3.02.42

By 03.02.42, the 33rd Army, the tasks assigned to it
Commander of the Western Front performed two groups.

The Western grouping consisting of the 113th, 160th, 338th and 329th SDs (the 9th Guards SD, which was part of it, was reassigned to the 43rd Army on February 2, 1942) by the end of February 2, three divisions (113th without a joint venture, 160- I without joint venture and 338th) went to the area of Dashkovka, Lyado, Vorobyovka (10-12 km southeast of Vyazma. By this time, the 329th SD with its main forces had passed Blokino, occupying a concession position to the left flank of the main forces of the western group, which was supposed to become a link with the group of General Belov, who went to the area of Verkh. Fetnikovo, Moloshino, Nikolskoye. The Belov group and the western grouping of the 33rd Army were not united by the general command and each acted independently. The eastern grouping of 110, 222, 93- th

SD and one regiment of the 160th SD by 03.02 was involved in stubborn battles with a stubbornly defending enemy: the **110th SD** fought for Voditskoye, Yusovo, but

had no success; **222nd SD**, surrounding the enemy in the Voinovo, Krasino, Kostino area , fought to destroy it. The **93rd SD** with the rifle regiment of the 160th SD fought at the turn of Kamenka,

Aleksandrovskoe, Chelishchevo, times. Gloomy. The enemy went on the offensive against the left flank of the division and

threw back its parts to Turovka, having mastered the Ugryumovo junction.

The western strike force, in order to ensure its communication from the north on the Gzhatsky Bolshak at the turn of Voskresenskoye, Lushchino, left the regiment of the 113th SD, which occupied an island position.

On the right, the regiment was removed from the units of the eastern group by 5 km and to the left from the units of the western group

by 45 km. From the south, on the same highway in the Zakharovo region, a battalion of the 93rd SD provided, which was in the same position as the rifle regiment of the 113th SD.

Thus, a corridor 4-5 km wide, through which the entire western group advanced, and subsequently the troops were fed, was provided by too weak forces, cut off from their troops and their neighbor on the left.

With such an isolated position of the supporting units, the communication of the Western group could not be considered strong. In addition, during this period the enemy stepped up his operations from the south and north. But no one is taking measures to strengthen them and secure these gates. The communication of the Western group was kept on parole. The neighbor on the right is the 5th Army.

Having a gap with the 33rd Army of up to 15-20 km, which was also not provided by anyone, she reached the line of Rylkovo, Dityatino, Kalyagino, Slashevo, where she met organized enemy resistance and could not develop the offensive further.

In the future, all attempts by the 5th Army to break through the enemy defenses on the front of Podelki, Zhikharevo did not give positive results. Despite this, she continued to concentrate her attention on the Gzhatsk direction, not paying attention

no attention to the neighbor on the left.

The neighbor on the left is the 43rd Army. During the period under review, it exclusively fought heavy battles with the enemy's Myatlev grouping and, of course, could not provide significant assistance in the large operation of the 33rd Army.

The commander of the Western Front scattered his forces and assets almost evenly over a vast area, having no clearly defined grouping in any direction to deliver a crushing blow to the enemy. He also did not have powerful reserves with which he could influence the course of the operation, depending on the prevailing situation in one or another

direction. The

only thing he could do in such conditions was to bombard the subordinate army with petty instructions and sometimes interfere even in their internal routine. The

enemy, being split by units of the 33rd and the right flank of the 43rd Army in the Iznoski area, began to quickly regroup and pull up reserves to the threatened place.

First of all, he throws the 292nd Infantry Division and part of the forces of the 20th TD from the second line against the eastern grouping of the 33rd Army. At the same time, he pulled up the 255th and the badly battered 267th Infantry Division into this area. As a result, by 02/02/42, he

managed to delay the offensive of the eastern group. The Myatlev grouping of the enemy (up to 6 infantry divisions) by this period was in a semi-encirclement in the area northeast of Yukhnov. Seeing its catastrophic situation, the enemy leaves relatively small forces in the west, conducting restraining rearguard battles, creating a strong strike force with the aim of breaking through to the northwest in the direction of Agaryshi. After continuous six-day battles on January 23, part of his forces managed to break through to the north-west through Agaryshi to the Yukhnov-Gzhatsk highway. The enemy breaks out of the deadly ring only due to the lack of forces of the 43rd Army, the large spread of troops along the front and the small number of their combat strength. And the front cannot exert its influence on the final defeat of the enemy's Myatlev grouping, since it does not have reserves.

The issue of defeating the enemy was further complicated by the fact that enemy aircraft dominated the air in this direction. In addition, the enemy hurriedly threw up reinforcements along the Warsaw highway, since the 50th Army was unable to saddle this only communication.

The SS regiment thrown here on January 23 pushed back parts of our 194th SD and captured Pupovka. The enemy exerted all his strength in order to keep the Yukhnov-Gzhatsk roadway behind him and thereby prevent the separation of the Vyazma grouping from the Yukhnov group. Neither the 43rd Army nor the 33rd Army were able to frustrate these enemy measures, since they did not have enough strength or means.

Conclusion: Due to the infliction of strong blows to the enemy in the Mozhaisk, Vereisky, Medynsky and Kondrov directions, a favorable situation was created at the junction of the 43rd and 33rd armies for the dismemberment and final defeat of the enemy in parts. This was facilitated by a 40-kilometer gap between the Vereisk and

Medyn groupings of the enemy, which was timely discovered by units of the 33rd and 43rd armies. But the prevailing

tendencies of the commander of the Western Front - to give the armies independent tasks without closely linking them with the actions of neighboring armies, to direct the efforts of the armies in different directions, to solve several tasks simultaneously with insufficient forces and means - continued to remain throughout this stage of the operation. There was no consistency in solving the major strategic task of defeating the main forces of the Moscow enemy grouping by concentrating consistent efforts in certain directions, with the resolution of which the main

task.

Experience has shown that it is impossible to solve a major problem without solving its successive stages.

Scattering forces without their operational coordination, in different directions, an attempt to solve several tasks simultaneously, without having sufficient forces for any of them, leads, as can be seen from the experience of the 33rd and 43rd armies, to failure and heavy

casualties. The desire to encircle the enemy is a good thing, but those around him should not forget that he himself can easily get into an encirclement if he does not have sufficient forces and means to carry out this operation. This happened with part of the forces of the 33rd and 43rd armies.

In this operation, the situation suggested that it was necessary, with the efforts of the 33rd, 43rd, 49th, 50th armies and part of the front reserves, to attack the Yukhnov enemy grouping, completely surround and destroy it, after which the entire left wing of the front, in cooperation with the Kalinin Front, would fall from the flanks on Vyazma-Gzhatskaya enemy grouping. Instead, the 33rd Army with very weak forces is sent against the enemy's Vyazma grouping, the 43rd Army with insufficient forces, stretched out on a wide front, proceeded to encircle the enemy's strong Myatlev grouping, the 49th Army made a breach to Yukhnov, where the enemy had enough prepared positions for defense, the 50th Army was drawn into inconclusive battles against the units defending the Warsaw highway and the enemy's Spas-Demensky grouping. All this led to the fact that, ultimately, the left wing

On the Western Front, no major successes were achieved in any direction. had.

The enemy took advantage of the scattered forces of the units of the left wing of the Western Front, took countermeasures in a timely manner and did not allow any of his groupings to catastrophe. These are the results of the first stage of the operation at the junction of the 33rd and 43rd armies.

Cutting off the western grouping of the 33rd Army from the main forces and its struggle in the environment. Actions of the 43rd, 49th armies and the eastern grouping of the 33rd army to break through a protracted gap to connect with units of the western grouping

On February 3, what could be expected every hour happened - communications were disrupted, and the western group was cut off from the main forces of the 33rd Army. At 02:00

on 03.02, the enemy launched an offensive against the units (the rifle regiment of the 113th SD and the rifle battalion of the 93rd SD), which provided communication for the western grouping of the army along the Iznoski-Zamytskoe highway, simultaneously from the south and north, along the Yukhnov-Gzhatsk highway. The enemy units

advancing from the south captured Zakharovo. The battalion of the 93rd SD, which defended Zakharovo, initially retreated to Savino under pressure from the enemy.

The units advancing from the north (from the Ivanovsky area) pressed the right-flank units of the regiment of the 113th SD and captured Voskresensk; the units advancing to the left of Voskresensk did not meet anyone on their way and approached Savino, where the frustrated units of the 93rd SD battalion had retreated the day before. These troops did not accept the battle and retreated into the forest east of Korkodinovo. The enemy occupied

Savino. At 11:00 03.02, the southern and northern enemy groupings linked up. Movement along the Iznoski-Zamytskoye road was suspended, and the western grouping of the 33rd Army was cut off from main forces.

The Western group at that time was fighting fierce battles on the outskirts of the city of Vyazma. The enemy increased the activity of his aviation and continuously bombarded the combat formations of the advancing units. At the same time, he threw tank units and machine gunners against them. On the road Vyazma-Losmino all the time

tanks, and machine gunners tried to influence the flanks of the advancing units. The eastern

grouping of the 33rd Army, as mentioned above, was drawn into stubborn battles and was removed from the supporting units by 5–7 km. Therefore, she could not take any part in the elimination of enemy units that had broken through along the Gzhatsk-Yukhnov highway. Parts of the 43rd Army also fought stubborn battles on an extended front and did not have free forces at hand to parry the enemy's counterattack. Therefore, to eliminate the enemy that has broken through, separate improvised detachments are rushed, which could not

restore position.

9th Guards The SD, which from 2.02 was reassigned to the 43rd Army, reached Iznoski on 1.02 with the lead regiment. The division on the move receives the task of advancing on Fedyukovo and at 17:00 on 03.02, units of the division separately enter

the battle. From 6:00 4.02 9th Guards. The SD with its two regiments, bypassing the enemy garrisons in Yezhovo and Nov. The village fought for Krapivka, Teleluy, and the third fought for Pinashino.

Thus, the division conducted an offensive on a front of up to 10 km, dispersing its forces on a wide front without proper artillery preparation, as a result of which it was unable to achieve positive results and did not eliminate the enemy that had broken through in the Zakharovo, Savino area.

This event, so important for the fate of the western grouping of the 33rd Army, was not initially given due importance by either the commander of the Western Front, or the commander of the 43rd Army, or the commander of the eastern grouping of the 33rd Army - since none of them took decisive measures to clear the communications of the western grouping of the army from the enemy.

Subsequently, events unfolded in such a way that the enemy reinforced the units that had closed the gap, organized a solid defense, and began to gather forces to eliminate the western grouping. The

commander of the Western Front continues to direct the 43rd, 49th and 50th armies against the Yukhnov grouping of the enemy and does not take any measures to restore the situation and ensure the actions of the western grouping of the 33rd army,

and the commander of the army himself, having no reserves, on the course of this operation could not influence.

The advance of the Western grouping on Vyazma was stopped by the enemy. On February 4, he went on the offensive from Chervonoe, Rozhkovo, Pesochnya, Lyado, Krasn. Tatars and by the end of the day took possession of the Hawks, Yurino. On the morning of February 5, parts of

the strike force occupied the line: 1st and 2nd Kharitonovka, Dashkovka, Gorozhanka, 329th SD - Kharkov, Mishinka.

In the future, all attempts by the enemy to seize this line were repulsed by parts of the western grouping with heavy losses for him. The enemy's advance to the line Voskresensk, Pinashino,

Savino, Zakharovo, Krapivka, Teleluy not only ensured that the western grouping of the 33rd Army was cut off from our main forces and its power supply was cut off. Simultaneously with the offensive in the eastern or southeastern direction, the enemy threatened to reach the rear of the right flank of the 43rd Army. Due to these circumstances, the commander-43 could not but pay attention to this direction.

A characteristic feature: haste, unnecessary haste, disorganization of the commander-43 in solving a complex problem are striking. Instead of concentrating forces and bringing them into battle in an organized manner with appropriate artillery support, from the very beginning of operations in the Zakharovo region, he began to send troops in parts. 9th Guards The SD was thrown into battle along the regiments on the move, as a result it did not give the proper result, and suffered heavy losses.

5.02 on Fedyukovo, the 18th RAF rushes into battle, at the same time the 5th TBR is concentrated in the Iznoski area. By the end of

February 5, the 415th SD was concentrated in the area of Agaryshi, Kolodezi, and from the morning of February 6, it went on the offensive on Nov. Village, Krapivka. 7.02 1st Guards. The

MSD is concentrated in the Myakota, Yezhovo area, and on the morning of February 8, together with the 9th Guards. SD it goes on the offensive north of Krapivka, on February 8, the 17th SD

concentrates in the Izvolsk region, and on February 9 goes on the offensive in the direction of Zakharovo. The fragmentation of forces and their

introduction into battle in parts led to the fact that none of these formations was successful.

Commander-43, convinced by experience of the perniciousness of actions by scattered forces, only from 09.02 begins to concentrate the main efforts in this direction and to bring troops into battle in a more organized manner, but the time and surprise of the strike have already been lost.

In the area of operations of the western grouping of the 33rd Army, the enemy, with the help of cruising tanks, managed to clear the Yukhnov-Vyazma highway in the Losmino-Vyazma sector; thus the western grouping of the army was divided into two parts. The main forces (113th, 160th, 338th SD) operated east of the road, the 329th SD with the 250th Airborne Regiment - to the west, where it entered into an elbow connection with parts of the Belov group. Therefore, on February 10, the commander of the Western Front subordinated the 329th SD and the 250th Airborne Regiment to the Belov group.

The enemy, seeing the persistent attacks of units of the 43rd Army and not hoping to hold the occupied line, on 10.02 urgently began preparing a rear defensive line along the river. Vorya and R. Ugra at the Vaulino, Berezki, Kostyukovo, Mal. Viselevo, Bol. Mouth, Zary. From February 10, the western

grouping of the 33rd Army goes over to all-round defense, reinforcing its units operating in the Zamytskoye area with the regiment of the 338th SD. Attempts by the 338th SD to

connect with Belov's units and firmly cut the Vyazma-Yukhnov highway in the Slobodka-Losmino section did not develop.

On the front of the eastern[476] grouping of the 33rd and 43rd armies, during the second half of February, a balance of forces was achieved, neither side was able to achieve tangible results. The battles that took place in the middle of the month could not affect the sharp change in the situation. The 222nd, 110th SD of the 33rd Army captured Kurdyumovo, Maryino, Izyumkovo, 02.24 - Kartsevo. On February 13, units of the 43rd Army

captured Zakharovo, February 24 - Grechishniki, February 26 - Korkodinovo, Ilyenki, Nov. Village, February 27 - Pinashino, Voskresensk. The 338th SD from the 16th to the

22nd cut the Vyazma-Yukhnov highway south and north of Ostrovka, but in the future it was unable to hold this area. In turn, on February 13, the enemy pushed back parts of the western group, occupied Ivanovskoye, Ivashutino, Chertakovo, Kuznetsovka.

All these separate episodes of the battles showed that the available forces and means to solve the problem - to break through the enemy's defenses and connect with parts of the western grouping for our troops, and for the enemy - to eliminate the western grouping - cannot be.

Therefore, during this period, there are regroupings and the accumulation of forces on both sides for further operations. The 160th SD is transferred from the western to the eastern sector of the front, the 93rd SD and the 5th TBR are reassigned to the 43rd Army.

The tasks set by the commander of the Western Front of the 43rd Army are to firmly capture the area of Korkodinovo and Ilyenki, Borisenki, Shcheloka no later than February 19, by the end of 22.02, enter the Valukhovo, Peskovo, Slobodka, Zhary area with the main forces, establish contact with the shock group 33- th army - still remained unfulfilled. The 43rd Army did not have sufficient forces and means for such an operation during this period.

In the course of these numerous battles, the tactics of the enemy in the defense of strongholds (settlements) in winter conditions and of our troops in their capture were clearly revealed. After our troops took possession of some strong point, they immediately sought to develop the offensive further, without securing the captured positions of the enemy. Sometimes the units were mixed up, control was lost, and in this order the offensive continued further.

The enemy took advantage of these opportunities, threw insignificant forces into the counterattack, trying to reach the flank and rear of the advancing units, and often he was able to restore lost positions. Therefore, the command of the 33rd and 43rd armies took this feature into account in the actions of the enemy and, after capturing one or another stronghold of the enemy, began to turn most of their forces into securing the captured positions, but this led to another drawback: the pursuit of the enemy began to be carried out by weak forces and did not give the proper effect when breaking his resistance in the strongholds. In this chain of battles, life has clearly confirmed that an offensive

can give the proper result only if the attacker has second echelons and reserve units; without this, one cannot count on the development of the offensive.

The first echelons must immediately and energetically pursue the enemy broken in defense, the second echelons must consolidate the success achieved by the first echelons, strengthen them and develop the emerging success.

But this can be when the attacker in the direction of the main attack will have enough forces and means, well-organized interaction between the combat arms and their command and control.

The operational situation on the front of the eastern and western groupings of the 33rd Army and the 43rd Army in early March

The eastern grouping of the 33rd Army was drawn into stubborn battles, with insignificant advances in certain directions. Particularly fierce fighting took place on the left flank, at the junction with the 43rd Army in the Bukari, Tulizovo area, again.

Gloomy. The western group fought in isolation on a stretched front surrounded by encirclement northeast of Staroselye, Kobelevo, Star. Luka, Kozly, Peskovo, Fedotkino, Medvedevo, Nikitinki, Morozovo, Kuznetsovka, Stanino, Tyakino, Maulino, Nov. Tsevkovo, Mal. Gusevka, Ezhevetsy, Koshelevo, Gorby, Krasnaya Polyana, Parshunkov, Kites, Lyadnoe, Khmilniki, Gatishino, High, Dorki, Belyaev, Relatives, Pozhishka.

The formations of General Belov went further to the west. The 329th SD and the 250th Airborne Regiment defended in isolation at the line of Tishino, Kuznetsovo, Selivanovo, Pusto-Troshino, Mishinka, Mininka, Kovaniki, Zobnovo, Monino and had

no connection with Belov. All this led to the fact that the units operating deep in the rear of the enemy were fragmented into separate centers, acted separately and inconsistently. This situation made it easier for the enemy to beat them piecemeal, which actually happened. The strike group

of the 43rd Army left by 4.03 and fought at the line of Savino, Grechishenka, Korkodinovo, Ilyenki, Krapivka, Yezhovo, Nov. Village. The

corridor separating the western grouping of the 33rd Army from the shock grouping of the 43rd Army was by this time 6-7 km wide.

On the right, the 5th Army fought protracted battles at the front line, its strike force in the direction of Gzhatsk could not break the enemy defenses. The struggle took on actions of a positional exhausting nature in winter conditions.

On the left, the 49th Army, as before, directed its main efforts towards capturing the city of Yukhnov and during this period fought directly on its approaches. Therefore, she could not help the 43rd Army in breaking through the enemy defenses to join the western grouping of the

33rd Army. In February and early March, the 43rd Army regrouped in order to strengthen the strike group on the right flank, poured in reinforcements and replenished the 5th and 18th TBRs with repaired tanks, preparing to break through the enemy defenses prepared in

advance on the river. Vorya. The enemy, in turn, was preparing for decisive action against units of the western grouping of the 33rd Army and part of the forces of the Belov group (329th SD and 250th Airborne Regiment). By this time, in the Gzhatsk and Yukhnov directions, the situation at the front had somewhat stabilized and he could withdraw part of his forces from passive sectors and throw them against the units operating in his rear. Therefore, in the first days of March, the Germans concentrated quite significant forces around the western grouping of the 33rd Army and the 329th SD and 250th VDP of the Belov group, directing the main efforts primarily against the 329th SD and 250th VDP.

Such is the operational situation in the direction under consideration, from which a whole chain of stubborn and bloody battles unfolded in March and in the first half of April.

From 04.03 the 43rd Army launched an offensive on the entire front, concentrating the main efforts on its right flank in the direction of Berezka and Shelomtsy.

The enemy grouped the main forces against the right flank of the 43rd Army, thereby somewhat weakening the onslaught against its left flank. In addition, he hastily began to retreat from the area east of Yukhnov, releasing part of his forces for action against the western grouping and the right flank of the 43rd

Army. In this situation, the transition to the offensive of the left flank of the 43rd Army came as a surprise to the enemy. Our troops have broken

the resistance of insignificant enemy forces and began to spread rapidly to the west. Parts of the left flank of the army had already captured the settlements of Krasnoe, Salkovo, Shcheloki, Zhelezinki, Maseykovo on March 5; March 6 - Panovo, Menoki, Stolbinka, Korolevo, having reached the eastern bank of the river. Ugra.

At the same time, the strike force on the right flank, after a stubborn battle, crossed the river by the end of 6.03. Vorya, took possession of the village of Berezki and developed an offensive against Shelomtsy.

The enemy still clung to each settlement, putting up stubborn resistance to the advancing units. Urgently throwing up part of the forces, he managed to temporarily delay the further offensive of the 43rd Army.

The 43rd Army again had to make a partial regrouping, pull up the artillery, put the units in order, and replenish individual units in order to go on the offensive again. With the offensive of the 43rd Army in the western direction, the western

grouping of the 33rd Army, with part of its forces, launched an offensive to the east (from the Kobelevo region to Shelomtsy) to connect with units of the 43rd Army. By 03.03 the latter had reached the line of 500 meters southwest of Shelomtsy, but having met strong enemy resistance, it could not advance further. The advancing units dug in at the reached line and engaged in a firefight with the enemy.

During this period, the separating corridor narrowed to 2.5–3 km. On March 10, units of the 43rd Army entered the western edge of the forest east of Shelomtsy, and it narrowed even more and now had a width of no more than two kilometers. But the 43rd Army failed to take the enemy's stronghold of Shelomtsy.

The enemy strained every effort to prevent the fall of the only stronghold separating our units. Everything that he had at hand, and everything that could be removed from the nearest sections, he filmed and threw Shelomtsy on hold. He even sacrificed a large foothold on the eastern bank of the river. Vorya in the area of Bocharovo, Borisenki, exposing him in front of the weak forces of two regiments of the 53rd SD. The liberated forces were also thrown into the Shelomtsy area. During this period, the enemy 5-6 times a day went into

counterattacks, supporting their units with strong artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire and aviation.

Stubborn battles with the advancing enemy were also going on in the western sector of the western grouping of the 33rd Army.

The enemy launched an infantry offensive with the support of tanks and aviation against units of the 113th SD, and by the end of 04.03 captured Nov. Grekovo, Koshelevo, 6.03 - Star. Grekovo, and 7.03 - Lomovka. All his attempts to develop a further offensive in the southeast direction by the division were repulsed.

On March 6, special subunits of the western group went on the offensive and drove the enemy out of Kuznetsovka. Parts of the western group continue to hold their vast area until 12.03, repelling numerous enemy attacks in different directions. During this period, the enemy directs the main efforts against the 329th SD and the 250th Airborne

Regiment. 4.03 he takes possession of Nikolskoe, Selishche. Parts of the 329th SD and the 250th Airborne Regiment were finally cut off from the rest of the Belov group, and the ring around them gradually began to shrink. Contact with Belov is lost. The division commander decides to break through to the east - to connect with units of the western grouping of the 33rd Army in the direction of Ostrovka, Slobodka. But he failed to break through. Parts of Belov urgently returned to the aid of the 329th Rifle Division and the 250th Airborne Regiment, which with difficulty made a narrow gap and ensured the exit of the main forces in a southwestern direction. Part of the troops without materiel made their way to join the western group. Thus, the enemy eliminated one focus in his rear. After that, he concentrates his main efforts against the western grouping of the 33rd Army.

Between March 10 and March 20, there was a pause in enemy operations against units of the western grouping from the west, when he did not conduct active operations with large forces, confining himself to operations of small groups from individual directions. Apparently, the enemy spent this period of time regrouping and pulling up forces against the western grouping and parrying the blows of the 43rd and 49th armies.

The shock group of the 43rd Army (two rifle regiments of the 415th SD, the 1st Guards SD, the 18th TBR and the bulk of the artillery) from March 8 to 16 conducts

continuous battles, striving at all costs to break through the enemy front in the direction of Shelomtsy, seize this stronghold and link up with units of the western grouping. On both sides there is a continuous strengthening of this direction. On March 10, the strike group is reinforced by the third regiment of the 415th SD. On March 12, Commander-43 throws an army guard battalion into battle in the same direction. 13.03 - further reinforces this direction with two rifle regiments of the 17th SD. But the shock group could not achieve significant results, and the enemy front was not broken through. How much the enemy strengthened the Shelomtsov direction by

exposing the remaining sectors is evident from the fact that when the 53rd SD received a defense task to cover the left flank of the strike group and the enemy saw that units were not active on the front of the 53rd SD, then he severely exposed and threw all the released forces to protect the stronghold of Shelomtsy. But the division, instead of sitting in place on the night of 15.03, goes on the offensive and with a surprise attack captures the villages of Borisenki and Kosaya Gora, which had been strongly defended by the enemy the day before, and all attempts to capture them were unsuccessful. The commander of the 43rd Army supports the initiative of the 53rd SD and sets it an active task instead of defense. On March 16, the division captured

Aleksandrovka and Aksenino, fought for Nikitskoye and Prudki.

During this period, the enemy carried out a private operation from the east to expand the dividing corridor. On March 10, pulling up forces from the southeast, he captured Rupasovo and launched an attack on Nov. Luke. On the morning of March 11, the enemy also launched an offensive from the northeast, by the end of the day Star was captured. Luke, cutting off the rifle regiment of the 338th SD and the 364th KAP from the main forces of the 160th SD. The cut off parts, spoiling the material part, began to make their way to the east through Gulyaev. On March 16, 145 people went to the Borisenki area, where they joined with
with their parts.

Thanks to the operation successfully carried out by the enemy, the separating corridor increased from 2 km to 7–8 km. From that day on, the position of the units of the western grouping began to deteriorate every day. Despite the fact that the

situation required the combined efforts of the 43rd and 49th armies in this direction, but this was not done,

armies continued to fight each in its own direction without close interaction. After stubborn fighting,

on March 19, the 43rd Army on the front of the shock group goes over to temporary defense at the reached line for the production of partial regroupings, bringing units into order and for introducing replenishment directly into battle formations.

On the morning of March 20, with the support of aviation on the left flank, the army went on the offensive and by the end of the day captured Taborka, Bocharovo, Nikitskoye, Prudki, Olgino,

Ilmezevo. On March 21, the strike group again goes on the offensive against Shelomtsy, the battles go on continuously until 23.03, but they are not successful.

23.03 5th Guards. SD from the 49th Army is transferred to the 43rd Army, which is being pulled up to the left flank of the army. At the same time, the 415th SD is castled on the left flank. The period

from the 24th to the morning of March 26 is spent on regrouping.

By the morning of March 26, the 43rd Army had created two strike groups on its flanks: the northern one, as part of the 9th Guards. SD, 17th SD, and 1st Guards. MSD, operating in the direction of Shelomtsy, Borisenka and southern - as part of the 53rd, 415th SD and 5th Guards. SD and the 18th TBR, operating in the direction of Zhara, Slobodka.

From 9.00 26.03 both strike groups went on the offensive in their respective directions. By the end of March 26, the southern strike force had captured Mal. The mouth, the rest of the success was not.

On March 19, the enemy resumed his active operations against the troops of the western group. One of his groups from the area of Moshenki, Safonovo, Znamenka launched an offensive in a northeast direction, and the second from the Staroselye area - in a northwest direction. The first group mastered Dorki on March 19,

Khmelniki on March 20, and Belyaev and Rodnya on March 22. At the same time, on March 22, the enemy launched an offensive from the north to Fedotkovo, but here he had no success. On March 20,

the second group of enemy troops captured Borisenki and launched an offensive against Buslav. Parts of the western group, showing genuine heroism, with a large shortage of ammunition and food, stopped the further advance of the enemy, inflicting heavy losses on manpower.

It took the enemy 6-7 days to pull up new forces and again go to action.

In this extremely difficult situation for the western grouping of the 33rd Army, the commander of the Western Front, in his directive No. k / 191 of March 24, did not come up with anything better than to reproach the troops fighting without shells, cartridges and food, about their weak resistance. And then set the task:

It is necessary for Comrade Efremov to organize defensive actions in such a way that in no case should he allow the surrender of the occupied territory and prevent the narrowing of the area of \u200b\u200boperations groups.

To speed up the clearing of the rear, Comrade Efremov to allocate part of the forces to help the 160th SD, which should be tasked with capturing Abramovo and advancing in the direction of Dolzhanka towards the 43rd army.

The offensive will begin in the morning of 25.03.

Like other orders of the Western Front, this one suffered from the same drawback - it did not take into account the actual situation, the state of the troops, their security, and so on. The order was given rather for the order, and not for the execution of it by the troops. From

March 28 to March 31, the 43rd Army regroups, shifting the center of gravity to the strike of the southern grouping. To this end, the southern grouping is reinforced by the 17th and 93rd SDs, on the right flank the army went on the defensive. On March

31, the commander of the Western Front, by directive No. 3844 of March 31, for the first time purposefully directs the actions of the 43rd and 49th armies to help the western grouping:

1. In view of the complete futility of attacks in the center of the army, stop

the attack. 2. The 217th, 238th Rifle Division and the 34th SVR regroup to the Pavlovo, Rusinovo sector and, with the help of three rifle divisions, one SVR, destroy the enemy in the Rusinovo, Pavlovo, Stenenki area, after which this strike group will develop an offensive in the direction of Slobodka, Good, interacting with the 43rd Army,

which, with its left-flank strike force, strikes in the direction of Shumikhin.

Activities, good but too late, and good for
they did not bring security for the exit of the Western group.

Based on this directive, the 49th Army is regrouping to its right flank, which ends by the morning of 3.04.

The 43rd Army completed the regrouping to its left flank by 1.04, and at 10:00 went on the offensive, captured Krasnaya Gorka, forced the river. Ugra and is fighting on the immediate outskirts of Bol. Mouth. This was quite a sufficient signal for the enemy to pay attention to this direction. Seeing the threat, the enemy quickly began to transfer reinforcements to the Bol area. Mouth. The fighting took on a protracted character and the 43rd Army did not receive any development of the offensive.

03.04 The 43rd Army puts its units in order and prepares for resumption of the offensive, without conducting active operations that day.

On the other hand, the 49th Army, with its strike group, went on the offensive at 08:00 on April 3, broke into Pavlovo, and fought an unsuccessful battle in the village all day.

On the night of April 4, the strike group of the 43rd Army again goes on the offensive, and from 06:00 on April 4, the strike group of the 49th Army resumes the offensive. But both shock groups again did not achieve positive results. After that, there is a pause again to prepare for the resumption of the offensive. This example shows

how the commanders of the 43rd and 49th armies acted inconsistently even when their strike groups had an elbow connection and advanced in the same direction.

Haste and haste in going over to the offensive without proper preparation and firm establishment of interaction and coordination of their actions with the actions of their neighbor continued to have a sharp negative effect on the conduct of the common operation of the two armies. On March 28, the enemy makes an attempt with

insufficient forces to break the resistance of units of the western grouping on the Nikitinka, Morozovo, and Manulino fronts. Despite his persistent actions, parts of the western group repelled all enemy attacks with heavy losses for him.

On 01.04, after previous unsuccessful attacks, the enemy bombarded the combat formations of the western part of the western grouping of the 33rd Army with aircraft. After a fierce fight, he manages to get hold of Mal. Kites, but he could not develop further success.

And only on 4.04 the enemy, pulling up his strength, again goes to active operations from the south to Arakcheevo and from the east to Kozly.

The position of the Western group is becoming critical. On April 10, the 43rd Army goes on the offensive and introduces the 18th TBR into battle. How far the offensive was not secured and the interaction of the branches of the armed forces was not organized is evident from the fact that all the tanks put into action were put out of action by the enemy on the first day of the battle, and only on 13.04 the army units finally captured Bol. Mouth.

In the future, both the 43rd and 49th armies could not advance, marking time until the final liquidation of the western grouping of the 33rd army by the enemy.

On April 11, the enemy launched an offensive from the south and north against the exhausted units of the western group, which had been in continuous battles for the past 1.5 months, repelling numerous enemy attacks.

By the end of the day, he managed to cut the western grouping and cut off the regiment of the 113th SD in the Gorba, Stukalovo area from the main forces.

Despite all the difficulties, the regiment broke the encirclement, destroyed the enemy garrison in Molodeni. Having captured trophies and prisoners, on 12.04 the regiment connected with the main forces of the western group. On April 12, the enemy crossed the river. Ugra and

took possession of the villages of Korosteli and Krasnoe on the eastern bank of the river. For the Western group, the last days of its existence are coming.

On April 12, the commander of the Western Front issues the last unfulfilled directive, No. k/202, to ensure the exit of the western grouping of the 33rd Army, which reads:

1. In view of the failure of the 43rd and 49th armies to fulfill the assigned tasks of clearing the rear routes of the 33rd army from the enemy and joining with the Efremov group, in connection with the withdrawal of the 113th and 338th SD of the Efremov group from the Tyakino, Stukolovo area, Vyalovka on the eastern bank of the river. Ugra, there is a threat of an isolated defeat of the Efremov group.

***2. In order to prevent the defeat of the Efremov group, I order: a)
Commander-43 Comrade Golubev - during April 12 and on the night of April 13, the main forces of the army should go to the line of Mal. Viselevo,***

Heat and, having gained a foothold on this line during April 14, capture Bol. Viselevo. New Mikhailovka;

b) Commander-49 Comrade Zakharkin - during April 12 and on the night of April 13, capture height 180.5, Stenenki and, having gained a foothold at this line, capture Moseenki, Degnyanka, Tibeikovo on April 14;

c) Commander-33 Comrade Efremov - on the night of April 12-13, secretly break through the enemy's curtain and strike in the direction of Rodnya, Mal. Boslavka, Nov. Mikhailovka, Moseenki, where to connect with units of the 43rd and 49th armies.

This directive, like all the others, was clearly impracticable, and none of the indicated connections complied with it. Since

the evening of 13.04 all communication with the units of the western group has been lost. Parts of the group in scattered detachments began to make their way to the east. As a whole organized unit, the Western group ceased to exist.

On this, the operation of the 33rd Army to capture the city of Vyazma, as set task before her commander of the Western Front, was completed.

Artillery of the 43rd Army in the March battles

Наименование соединений	Система и калибр	Количество орудий, вывезенных на огневые позиции
Артиллерия 1-й гв. МСД	37 мм ЗП 45 мм 57 мм 76 мм 122 мм	3 (1 нем.) 8 4 22 6
Итого		43
Артиллерия 5-й гв. СД	25 мм 45 мм 76 мм 122 мм 20 мм	2 10 9 10 4
Итого		35
Артиллерия 9-й гв. СД	7 мм 5 мм 6 мм 22 мм 20 мм	4 6 15 4 7
Итого		36

Наименование соединений	Система и калибр	Количество орудий, вывезенных на огневые позиции
Артиллерия 17-й СД	20 мм 37 мм 3П 45 мм 76 мм 120 мм	1 (нем.) 5 2 18 3
Итого		29
Артиллерия 415-й СД	20 мм 45 мм 76 мм 122 мм 20 мм	3 7 21 7 4
Итого		42
Артиллерия 53-й СД	37 мм 3П 45 мм 76 мм 122 мм 120 мм	5 (нем.) 2 15 8 2
Итого		32
Артиллерия 93-й СД	37 мм 3П 45 мм 76 мм 122 мм 120 мм	3 12 17 7 8
Итого		47
Артиллерия 18-й СБР	45 мм 76 мм 107 мм	1 8 5
Итого		14
64 ГАП	122 мм 52 мм	6 2
Итого		8
128 ГАП	122 мм 52 мм	19 11
Итого		30

Наименование соединений	Система и калибр	Количество орудий, вывезенных на огневые позиции
210 ГАП	122 мм	12
Итого	152 мм	6
		18
320 ПАП	122 мм	2
Итого	152 мм	9
		11
998 АП	152 мм	17
570 АП	152 мм	6
590 ПАП БМ	203 мм	2
868 ПТАП	37 мм 3П	7
Итого	85 мм	8
		15
869 ПТАП	37 мм 3П	6
	37 мм ПТ	2 (нем.)
Итого	85 мм	8
		16
2 ОГМД	М-13	4
3 ОГМД	М-8	8
19 ОГМД	М-13	7
20 ОНМД	М-13	6
25 ОГМД	М-8	4
Итого		29
24 ОМД	120 мм	26
164 ОЗАД	37 мм 3П	4
Итого	85 мм	4
		8
64 ОЗАД	76 мм 3П	4
71 ОЗАД	85 мм	16 м

The shock group of the 43rd Army, consisting of the 53rd, 415th, 17th SD and the 5th Guards. SD, 18th SBR and 18th TBR from 25.03 dealt the main blow on the left flank of the army on a front of 3 km.

For reconnaissance, topographic work, installation of guns in new firing positions and other work, the artillerymen were given 3 days from 23 to 25.03 - a sufficient period. Infantry support artillery groups (PP)

were created according to the number of divisions operating in the main direction (PP of the 53rd SD, 5th Guards SD, 415th SD, long-range army group and RS3 artillery). Each group was given a firing line and additional sectors of shelling with the involvement of 1 to

2 divisions. Management -

centralized. The
composition of the groups was as follows.

Group PP 53rd SD: 45

mm - 2; 76

mm - 15; 122

mm - 8; 120

mm min. - 2;

37mm zen. guns - 5.

Total - 32 guns.

Group PP 5th Guards. SD:

25 mm - 2;

45 mm - 10;

76 mm - 9;

122 mm - 22;

120 mm min. - 4;

152 mm - 6.

Total - 53 guns.

Group PP 415th SD: 20

mm - 3; 45

mm - 7; 76

mm - 21; 122

mm - 7; 120

mm min. - 4 Total

- 42 guns.

Long-range group: 122 mm - 8;

152 mm -

32; 203 mm

-2; M-13 -

17; M-8 - 4

Total -

63 guns.

With the commissioning of the 17th Rifle Division and the 18th Rifle Regiment in the main direction
the number of artillery increased by:

20 mm -
1; 45 mm
- 3; 76 mm
- 26; 120
mm - 3; 107 mm
min. - 5; Total - 38 guns.

In the strike direction, the artillery density per 1 km of the front was - 76 guns (including large mortars and RS).

On the binding direction on the site of the 1st Guards. MSD, 9th Guards. SD and 93rd SD average artillery density per 1 km of the front was about 7 guns (including heavy mortars and RS).

By the beginning of the offensive on March 26, the artillery in the main direction of ammunition had the following number of ammunition in its firing positions. PP

group of the 53rd SD: 76 mm - 0.3 b / c; 122 mm - 0.4 b / c; 45 mm - 1 b / To; 120 mm min. - 1 b/c.

Group PP 5th Guards. SD: 76 mm - 225 rds; 122-mm - 192 rds; 120 mm - 21 min. 45 mm - 2778 rds; 57 mm - 200 rds; 152 mm - 13 rds; PP group

of the 415th SD: 76 mm - 1846 rds; 122 mm - 95 rds; 120 mm - 0 rds; 45 mm - 3262 rds. Group DD: 152 mm -

about 3 b / c; 122 mm - 2 b / c; 203 mm - 69 rds. OGMD - 20 volleys.
23.03

transport filed: 122-mm - 300 rounds; 152 mm - 3100 rds. 26.03 transport filed: 76 mm - 26150

rounds; 122 mm - 5150 rds. In addition, there was a supply of

ammunition for the PAS and vehicles were on the way. Conclusion - there were no interruptions in the supply of military products. The distribution of artillery in

directions was correct, but there were a number of shortcomings in the method of firing and interacting with infantry and tanks when performing practical tasks, which led to the fact that the army's strike group did not fulfill its tasks of breaking through the enemy's defensive line. These shortcomings include:

1. There was no continuous communication with the infantry, and at critical moments artillery did not support it with fire.

2. Artillery crews were poorly prepared, which had a dramatic effect on the suppression of enemy firing points, which came to life when the infantry approached them. At the same time, an inconclusive large overrun of ammunition was carried out. 3. With the support of the offensive of tanks, a special artillery group (up to 2 artillery regiments) and

escort guns were allocated, but due to the poor work of the calculations, its effectiveness was insignificant, the enemy's anti-tank firing points were weakly suppressed.

On April 8, the 18th TBR was brought into battle, but due to the poor performance of the artillery, the enemy's anti-tank artillery was not suppressed. All tanks (7 units) were put out of action by enemy artillery fire on the first day of the battle. 4. Artillery did not accompany tanks and infantry, when attacking the enemy did not conduct barrage fire, did not blind the enemy with smoke shells, there was no artillery attack.

5. Poor organization of interaction. Example: on 30.03 at 14:40, the artillery ceased fire, while the infantry was under the destructive machine-gun fire of the enemy and was silent until 16:30, when the infantry had already begun to roll back and only after that the artillery opened fire.

All these shortcomings led to scattered actions of the military branches, which is why the main task of breaking through the enemy's defense was not, completed.

Tanks

In the operation under consideration in winter conditions, tanks were not widely used.

The main task during this period fell on them, in direct interaction with the infantry, with the support of artillery, to break into the enemy defense system. These tasks demanded from the infantry, tank and artillery commanders a good organization of the battle, clear control and precise mutual understanding in solving combat missions.

A characteristic feature of the use of tanks was that they were used in small groups and mainly medium and heavy tanks. Small tanks, due to their poor maneuverability, were used to strengthen the defense and were used as fixed armored firing points.

Tanks can be of great benefit to the infantry only when all issues of interaction are practically worked out together with the infantry and artillery. As a bad example,

one can cite the action of the 18th and 5th TBR together with the 9th Guards. SD during March 1–2 in the Korkodinovo area. Due to the haste of the commander-43 and the head of the tank group, as well as due to the failure to work out issues of interaction with units of the 9th Guards. The operation was not successful with SD and artillery.

A positive example of the use of tanks in close cooperation with infantry and artillery, good preparation and organization of the battle itself are the actions of the 18th TBR to capture the enemy stronghold in the village of Zakharovo. On February 13,

after linking all the issues of interaction between infantry, tanks and artillery, the stronghold was taken in a short time and with small losses.

Aviation

With the beginning of the deep operation by the 33rd Army, aviation did not provide

it. The regrouping and advancement of units until they reached the Vyazma region were not covered by aviation, while enemy aircraft bombarded the units that were making a march-maneuver to the west all the time and delayed their advance. Our aviation

basically operated scattered, in small groups in different directions. For the most part, she concentrated her efforts on night flights, which were ineffective. Its action was distributed to the bombing of the nearest and deep rear areas, railway and highway junctions, concentrations of enemy troops, equipment and airfields in different directions. To a small extent, she acted to cover her troops, and to an even lesser extent - on the battlefield

in direct

interaction with ground troops. There

was no clearly defined aviation grouping on the Western Front, which could consistently solve operational tasks in cooperation with ground forces. Aviation was used fragmented with fragmented forces and not purposefully. Therefore, it did not give tangible results in the period under review. For example, on the night and day of January 18, on the front of the

10th, 20th, 16th and 49th armies, aviation made 181 sorties, of which more than half fell on night operations. Consequently, the army in the daytime accounted for an average of up to 20 sorties. Such a meager dose of the army did not give anything.

Subsequently, the work of aviation took place in approximately the same style throughout the entire

operation. Aviation for the first time begins to interact with the 33rd Army on February 7, when it makes 30 sorties to support it. Only from the second half of February aviation gradually, to a small extent, begins to operate on the battlefield in cooperation with ground forces.

As a positive example of the good work of aviation on the battlefield in cooperation with the strike group of troops of the 43rd Army, one can cite its action on 20.03. On

the morning of March 20, the strike group of the 43rd Army went on the offensive, it was accompanied by aviation, which bombarded and fired at the defending enemy units from attack aircraft, as a result of which the strike group broke the enemy's resistance and captured a whole series of its strongholds - Taborki, Bocharovo, Nikitskoye, Prudki , Olgino, Ilmezevo. Until that time (and even after it), the strike force usually operated without even being covered from the air, which allowed enemy aircraft to influence its advancing units with impunity. The second example: from 31.03

the enemy began active operations against units of the western grouping of the 33rd Army. Thanks to the influence of our aviation on the enemy's battle formations, all his attacks against the western grouping were easily repulsed with heavy losses for him.

Experience shows that success cannot be achieved by fragmented forces. in no direction.

Where you are looking for solutions, the main forces of all branches of the armed forces, including aviation, should be concentrated. Only successive concentrated strikes can achieve operational success.

Replenishment system

The general replenishment system can be seen from the attached tables. We want to dwell on one issue here - about the system of replenishment of units directly engaged in combat. **03.02** The 43rd

Army receives reinforcements of 2,000 men. **February 12**
- 2865 people. **On**

February 15 and **March 1**, the 17th SD receives replenishment, respectively, 800 and 250 people. 415th SD - 700 people.

22.02 1st Guards. The MSD receives a complete replenishment of two

marching companies. At a time when the 43rd Army is fighting intense battles, they send it replenishment not by marching units, but by the number of people.

Further, the divisions, in turn, receive replenishment by the number of people precisely at the time when they are fighting to break through the enemy's defensive system.

People (unfired and insufficiently trained) immediately join the battle formations and begin to fight. There was a large disproportion in fighting qualities between fighters hardened in battles and newcomers who had not even been fired upon. The first in a combat situation were stable and fought well. The latter were less stable and often at first

panicked.

As a result, the old units, often dissolved among poorly trained newcomers, did not perform combat missions and suffered heavy losses. Such a

principle of replenishment, as experience has shown, is no good.

Second: we see when the 1st Guards. The MSD receives replenishment by an entire organized unit in the form of marching companies, which were initially given secondary tasks, fired on, and only after that they were introduced to perform tasks in the main direction.

We consider this method to be correct. It must be secured by the appropriate order. This will save you from unnecessary and unnecessary losses and will not disrupt the implementation of combat missions.

General

conclusions 1. The operational concept of the operation to suddenly seize Vyazma, reach the rear of the Gzhatsko-Vyazma grouping of the enemy, separate the Vyazma grouping from the Yukhnovskaya group and simultaneously defeat them in parts did not correspond to the availability of forces and means allocated for this purpose by the Western Front.

An incorrect assessment of the enemy and his combat effectiveness after inflicting serious defeats on him in previous battles, incorrect timing and ignoring the conditions in which our troops operated led to an incorrect decision, as a result of which the planned operation was not carried out.

2. If the Western Front had first attacked the Yukhnov group with its entire left wing (33rd, 43rd, 49th, 50th and Belov's group), surrounded it and destroyed it (for which, according to the conditions of the situation, full opportunity was provided), then, together with with the right wing and in cooperation with the Kalinin Front, he could liquidate the Sychev-Gzhatsk-Vyazma grouping of the enemy. But instead, the Western Front prematurely pursued large targets, wanted to simultaneously defeat the Gzhatsko Vyazemskaya, Yukhnovskaya, Spas-Demenskaya and Myatlevskaya enemy groups, without having sufficient forces and means for this. The actions of the Western Front were likened to action with spread fingers. Each army had its own strike force, which operated in its own direction without close coordination with its neighbors. Even when the 43rd and 49th armies were correctly targeted to solve one common task of breaking through the enemy defenses in order to link up with units of the western grouping of the 33rd army, in this case, too, close cooperation between them was not established.

The armies, accustomed to acting independently, without linking their actions with their neighbors, continued to remain true to their old principles.

And it turned out that when the shock grouping of one army advanced, the grouping of the second army stood still, and then the armies changed roles. At the same time, the command of the Western Front continued to observe how the shock groups of the two armies were fighting side by side, and did not interfere in their affairs until the operation in this direction was completely disrupted.

3. The Western Front did not create a kulak in the form of a large powerful grouping from all branches of the military in a decisive direction, with the help of which it would solve the problem of a large operational scope.

Forces and means were almost evenly distributed along the entire vast front. The loud orders given by the commander of the Western Front were impossible to carry out. Not a single order for the entire operation was carried out on time by the troops. They remained bare unnecessary paper, which did not reflect the actual situation of the troops and did not represent a valuable operational document. And the haste shown by the command of the Western Front was transferred to the troops and brought great harm to the cause. Operations began unprepared, without close

interaction between the branches of the armed forces, formations were introduced into battle in parts, without achieving surprise, if only to start the operation as soon as possible, without analyzing its further fate.

4. Aviation was also fragmented along the entire front into small groups, there were no concentrated strikes in succession in certain directions, and when the troops broke through the enemy's pre-prepared defenses, they almost did not participate on the battlefield, which had a strong negative effect on the morale of the troops.

5. Tank and artillery weapons were also used irrationally and heavily dispersed.

6. The command and control of the troops operating in this direction on the part of the Western Front was weak.

This was especially pronounced in the absence of sufficient reserves from the commander of the Western Front, who could not influence the course of operations without them.

7. Shortcomings in the actions of the 43rd and 49th armies are similar to those indicated above, which were scattered on a wide front in different directions, without closely linking the ongoing operations with each other. They did not know how to quickly concentrate their superiority of forces in a decisive direction by decisively exposing secondary sectors of the front. The desire to be strong everywhere, the fear of operational risk led to the dispersion of forces and means in each of them.

At first, the armies did not even have sharply defined strike groups. The 49th Army stands out especially for the worse in this matter, in which even divisions operated in different directions, and it is impossible to understand from the operational situation where and in what direction the army commander is looking for a solution to his problem. The 43rd Army, starting from February, had strike groups in certain directions, but they were weak in number and fragmented in strength. At the first stage, she had to fight against the enemy's Myatlev grouping, which strained every effort to break through parts of the 43rd Army to the northwest, and against the protracted gap in the Zakharovo area. Subsequently, she created two strike groups and, finally, one strong southern group, but with a great delay. Maneuverability in parts was weak and little agile. The 43rd Army is also characterized by haste, haste to bring units into battle in batches, in parts, without proper organization of the interaction of all branches of the military, which is why the army did not have major successes.

8. The Western grouping of the 33rd Army fought honestly and valiantly until the end of its existence. With a shortage of ammunition and food, she fought for 2.5 months in complete isolation from her troops, inflicting great damage in manpower to the enemy and fettering his large forces with her actions.

When the enemy split the western grouping of the 33rd Army into pieces and went to the eastern bank of the river. Ugra, on the one hand, the futility of the battles of the 43rd and 49th armies to break through the defense became clear, on the other hand, the fate of the western group.

Under these conditions, the most expedient decision could be as follows: sacrificing materiel and saving manpower, the western grouping would not go to the east, as ordered by the commander.

Western front, and to the west, to the [Jabot detachment.\[177\]](#) But here, too, the commander of the Western Front did not dare, for the last time, to save the Western grouping, to give such instructions that would correspond to the actual situation. Instead, he gives the obviously impossible order for the western grouping to break through to the east, and for the 43rd and 49th armies to break through the enemy defenses to the full depth in one day.

9. Thanks to major shortcomings, primarily of an operational nature, large shortcomings in the actions of the 43rd and 49th armies, the enemy avoided defeat in parts. Instead of an operational scale, a purely tactical success turned out - the displacement of the enemy's Myatlev grouping, the capture of Yukhnov and reaching the line of the Vorya and Ugra rivers. These are the general results of the

operation of the 33rd and 43rd armies in the Vyazemsky direction.

West. Direction of the Operations

Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army

Resolution of the military commissar of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army, Major General I. N. Ryzhkov, to the Deputy Head of the Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Spacecraft, Major General S. I.

Teteshkin:

Comrade. Teteshkin The military commissar of the General Staff and I were acquainted with the materials. It should be noted that Com. Vasilchenko did a great, important, serious job and conscientiously selected the documents characterizing the position of the armies and the tasks assigned to the troops. The material gives a critical assessment of the actions of the leadership of the front. Keep the document in the affairs of the direction, it will still be needed. The rest of the commanders should take the example of working on the material from Comrade. V
06/27/1942

Ryzhkov**Applications[178]**

**Information about the combat and strength of the western group
33rd Army on March 11, 1942**

Соединения и части	Личный состав					
	стрелковые	артиллеристы	спец. подразд.	штабы	тылов. подразд.	всего
113 стрелк. дивизия	516	245	476	55	441	1733
160 стрелк. дивизия	1371	1330	569	245	679	4197
329 стрелк. дивизия	371	685	131	79	275	1541
338 стрелк. дивизия	619	1207	512	191	365	2894
364 КАП	225	706	—	19	122	1072
109 ГАП	—	212	—	15	49	276
131 сп 9 гв. СД*	144	49	29	4	96	322
104 полк связи	—	—	250	6	—	256
321 САПБ	—	—	235	4	28	267
Опер. группа армии	—	—	—	222	—	222
Всего	3249	4434	2202	840	2055	12780

* As of March 6, 1942

**Information about the losses of personnel of the units of the western group
33rd Army from 1.02 to 10.03. 1942**

Соединения и части	Убито и умерло на путях эвакуации	Ранено, контужено и пр. с эвак. в госпиталь	Заболело с эвакуац. в госпиталь	Обморож. с эвакуац. в госпиталь	Пропало без вести	Попало в плен	По другим причинам	Всего
113 стрелк. дивизия	291	504	52	1	137	6	19	1010
160 стрелк. дивизия	273	825	86	3	313	—	50	1549
329 стрелк. дивизия	65	128	27	—	13	—	7	240
338 стрелк. дивизия	459	1239	73	—	285	4	10	2070
364 КАП	23	35	—	—	11	—	—	69
109 ГАП	50	61	4	—	6	—	—	121
131 сп 9 гв. сд*	42	111	—	—	—	—	—	153
104 сп*	6	4	—	—	—	—	—	10
331 ОАСБ**	8	15	—	—	—	—	—	23
Всего	1216	2922	244	4	765	10	86	5245

* For February and March 1–5.

** For March

**Extract from the report on the loss of personnel by units of the Western Front
for the 43rd Army in the period from March 10 to April 20, 1942**

Соединения и части	Убито и умерло на путях эвакуации	Ранено, контужено с эвак. в госпиталь	Заболело с эвакуац. в госпиталь	Обморож. с эвакуац. в госпиталь	Пропало без вести	По другим причинам	Всего
1 гв. МСД:							
с 10 по 20.03	374	1243	50	12	38	—	1717
с 20 по 31.03	200	654	37	6	60	—	961
с 1 по 10.04	104	409	28	1	9	1	552
с 11 по 20.04	31	173	47	—	7	—	278
Всего за период:	709	2479	162	19	114	1	3484

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 гв. СД:							
с 10 по 20.03	185	502	14	11	4	15	731
с 21 по 31.03	215	532	31	7	6	—	791
с 1 по 10.04	64	173	10	—	1	—	248
с 11 по 20.04							
Всего за дивизию:	464	1207	55	18	11	15	1770
17 СД:							
с 10 по 20.03	204	1227	34	2	419	—	1886
с 21 по 31.03	125	604	88		78		895
с 1 по 10.04	115	413	74	—	65	1	668
с 11 по 20.04	169	742	52	—	119	4	1086
Всего за дивизию:	613	2986	248	2	681	5	4535
53 СД:							
с 10 по 20.03	286	503	27	12	—	—	828
с 21 по 31.03	400	793	31	9	2	1	1235
с 1 по 10.04	350	954	54	32	41	1	1432
с 11 по 20.04	210	568	30	12	32	—	852
Всего за дивизию:	1246	2817	132	65	75	2	4337
26 гв. СД:							
с 1 по 20.03	64	221	5	19	1	—	310
с 21 по 31.03	109	403	120	—	—	—	654
с 1 по 10.04	45	255	29	—	—	—	329
с 11 по 20.04	25	77	35	—	—	—	137
Всего за дивизию:	243	956	189	41	1	—	1430
415 СД:							
с 10 по 20.03	451	1016	5	9	48	—	1531
с 21 по 31.03	542	940	46	—	19	—	1552
с 1 по 10.04	688	1124	31	5	126	—	1974
с 11 по 20.04	253	524	—	—	2	—	798
Всего за дивизию:	1934	3604	101	14	195	5	5853
18 СБР:							
с 10 по 20.03	25	145	1	—	—	—	171
с 21 по 31.03	25	86	—	—	1	—	112
с 1 по 10.04	236	499	46	—	14	—	795
с 11 по 20.04	138	267	4	—	6	—	415
Всего за бригаду:	424	997	51	—	21	—	1493
18 ТБР:							
с 10 по 20.03	40	167	4	—	88	—	299
с 21 по 31.03	3	39	11	—	27	—	80
с 1 по 10.04	7	196	11	—	—	—	214
с 11 по 20.04	11	117	1	—	118	—	247
Всего за бригаду:	61	519	27	—	233	—	840
5 гв. СД:							
с 10 по 20.03*							
с 21 по 31.03	563	1716	54	8	16	13	2370
с 1 по 10.04	369	1113	49	2	16	1	1550
с 11 по 20.04	327	1099	62	1	3	2	1494
Всего за дивизию:	1259	3928	165	11	35	16	5414
ВСЕГО ЗА АРМИЮ:	6953	19491	1130	170	1366	44	29156

Extract from the report on the losses of personnel of the 194th, 238th sd, 18th guards. sd and 34th brigade of the 49th army for the period from March 10 to April 20, 1942

Соединения и части	Убито и умерло на путях эвакуации	Ранено, контужено и пр. с эваку. в госпиталь	Заболело с эвакуац. в госпиталь	Обморож. с эвакуац. в госпиталь	Пропало без вести	Попало в плен	По другим причинам	Всего
194 СД:								
с 1 по 20.03	105	296	32	17	—	1	—	451
с 21 по 31.03	4	30	56	1	—	—	—	91
с 1 по 10.04	161	659	55	240	—	—	2	1117
с 11 по 20.04	275	913	35	67	—	2	8	1300
Всего за дивизию:	545	1898	178	325	—	3	10	2959
238 СД:								
с 10 по 20.03	232	691	33	5	—	—	—	961
с 21 по 31.03	186	463	40	61	—	—	—	750
с 1 по 10.04	484	796	32	—	—	—	8	1320
с 11 по 20.04	343	903	19	194	—	—	—	1459
Всего за дивизию:	1245	2853	124	260	—	—	8	4490
18 гв. СД:								
с 10 по 20.03	167	636	13	3	—	2	—	821
с 21 по 31.03	494	1319	28	34	—	—	1	1876
с 1 по 10.04	151	513	13	8	—	—	—	685
с 11 по 20.04	25	112	8	2	—	—	—	147
Всего за дивизию:	837	2580	62	47	—	2	1	3529
34 СБР:								
с 10 по 20.03*								
с 21 по 31.03	131	362	53	3	—	16	—	565
с 1 по 10.04	105	231	8	—	—	—	—	344
с 11 по 20.04*								
Всего за бригаду:	236	593	61	3	—	16	—	909
ВСЕГО	2863	7924	425	635	—	21	19	1887

* No information available.

Appendix III

Documentation

A. Soviet documents

1. Operational summary of the headquarters of the 33rd Army on the military operations of formations and units of the army to destroy the enemy who had broken through and restore defense in the area of the city of Naro-Fominsk[179]

No.

210 December 2, 1941, 5:00 pm

1. Parts of the 33rd army during the day fought to restore the lost 1.12 positions and destroy the enemy tanks and infantry that had broken through. In the morning, the enemy opened

heavy machine-gun, mortar and artillery fire on the battle formations of the units, subsequently weakening it. In a number of areas he limited his actions to stubborn resistance to our units. In the 110th Rifle Division section, the enemy went on the offensive by the second half of the day and, suffering heavy losses, slowly advanced in the direction of Mogutovo. Throughout the day, enemy aviation in groups carried out continuous raids and bombardment of our combat

formations and rear areas in the direction of the Moscow-Kyiv highway. Our aviation bombed the concentration of enemy infantry and tanks in the areas of Tashirovo, Krasn. Tureyka and Naro-Fominsk,

inflicting heavy losses on enemy manpower and materiel.

2. Tank group (11 tanks of the 5th tank brigade, 30 tanks of the battalion and the combined detachment of the 183rd reserve regiment) under the command of the beginning. ABTV Army Colonel Safir, from 14:30 is fighting: two companies in the Petrovsky district with 10-12 tanks and about 200 people. enemy submachine gunners, here our tanks destroyed 4 enemy tanks, losing their three tanks. 11 tanks of the 5th brigade, operating from Rassudovo, captured the enemy at 14.30. 210.8, where they were met by anti-tank fire and are fighting. One detachment company in the commander's reserve [in] the Rassudovo area. The fight continues.

3. 222 sd - suffered heavy losses, separate units and subunits are fighting in the environment. According to the data just received, the commander of the division, Colonel Leshchinsky, went missing during the attack on the command post. The division is commanded by the chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Sedulin. The rear of the division was cut off and the units were left

without supplies. Liaison officers sent to clarify the detailed situation

did not return back. In front

of the division 62 pp and part of 258 pd.

4. 1 Guards.

honey. a) 1289 [sp] during the day fought stubborn battles for the restoration of the former position. Op[opponents] put up stubborn fire resistance. By the end of the day, the regiment took

possession of: three houses of svh. and continues to fight for svh.

Units of 458 pp and 29 mp [opponents] are operating against the regiment.

Trophies of the regiment: 40 prisoners, 3 guns, 1 tbsp. machine gun, 1

mortar; b) 175 mp - fought on the right flank in the vicinity of the military camp, left flank occupies the same position. The opponent has a strong fire resistance of 8 mp (3 md). By order of the Commander of the 1st Guards.

honey, a detachment of 80 people. advances in the direction of Bekasovo, Nikolsky Dvory, Golovenki with the task of establishing contact with 222nd Rifle Division. Data on the position of the detachment by 17:00 was not received. 6 MP occupies the left bank of the river. Nara

on the section of the railway d., brick. [factory?] (2 km south of Nara). During the day, the battle formations were bombarded by enemy aircraft.

5. Parts of the 110th Rifle Division during the day fought heavy battles

at the front: a) 1287th Rifle Regiment - Ivanovka, Afanasovka

with the front to the south; b) 1291 in the forest east.

Savelovka front to the west. The enemy, having occupied Savelovka and Volkovskaya Dacha, went on the offensive in the afternoon and, despite the heavy losses that he suffers, is slowly advancing in the direction of Mogutovo. In front of the division, units 330 and 557 of the enemy points were installed. The fights continue. Losses are cleared up.

6. 113th Rifle Division from 16.00, together with the consolidated regiment 43A, launched an offensive on Klovo and Kamenskoye with the task of capturing the latter and striking in the rear of the enemy grouping in the Volkovskaya Dacha, Savelovka area to alleviate the situation of the 110th Rifle Division. The PC division of the 43rd army fired a salvo at Romanovo, the results are unknown. The fights continue. Kamenskoye and Klovo occupy 59 mp (20 TD).

Chief of Staff of the 33rd Army Major General (**A. Kondratyev**) Military
Commissar of the Army Headquarters Battalion Commissar (**M. Potapov**)
Operations Department Colonel (**S. Kinoshin**) Military
Commissar of the Operations Department Bat.

commissioner (**Ya. Erofeev**) TsAMO, f. 388, op. 8712, d. 14, l. 112–113

2. **Report of the Lieutenant General to P. A. Belova**
the Commander-in-Chief of the Western Direction G.K. Zhukov [180] (cipher
No. 1085)

Explanation

I present the list of combat and numerical strength
corps [181] on 02/25/1942 and a brief description of the hostilities.

The raid on Vyazma began on the night of January 27, 1942.

Stage 1. In the course of three nights, I managed to lead five cavalry divisions through the enemy defenses and the Varshavskoye Highway. The First Guards Cavalry Corps managed to overcome the Warsaw highway; after a long time no one succeeded. The corps went into the raid light. Only the regimental artillery of the Guards divisions was taken, and even then not completely. All divisional artillery, divisional rears, a tank brigade, anti-aircraft artillery divisions, the RS regiment were deliberately not taken, since the vehicles could not pass without a road in deep snow. Stage 2. The Vyazma-Cheplyaev railway was crossed by the corps on January 31, 1942,

although it was guarded by the enemy. The railway is still held by the Germans, separating the 33rd Army from the First Guards Cavalry Corps.

Stage 3. The attack on Vyazma in cooperation with the 33rd Army. Day after day the corps moved forward. Took a SHEPHERD, saddled

big road near VOLODARETS. 16 (sixteen) kilometers left to VYAZMA. The 33rd Army did not advance. Interaction failed. The enemy freely maneuvered with reserves and knocked out the 117th ski battalion and the 75th cavalry division from the highway and from PASTIKHA. The enemy is strongly entrenched. There are almost no means of suppressing it in the corps.

Stage 4. From February 12 to February 15, 1942, an attempt to capture Semlevo together with the 8th airborne brigade. SEMLEVO is surrounded. Fighting in the streets. The enemy on the radio asks for help. He threw reserves from VYAZMA to the station SEMLEVO, station IZDESHKOVO. Enemy tanks decide everything. The siege of the village of Semlevo is lifted. SEMLEVO is the tactical key to the railroad. Cars and tanks approach it from three sides along the cleared roads.

Stage 5 On February 18, 1942, an offensive towards the railway near the SEMLEVO station to connect with Sokolov [182] in order to cut off VYAZMA from the west. The offensive on the narrow front up to the railroad is proceeding successfully: the enemy has heavy losses and we have trophies. Suddenness achieved. There are no funds for a solid destruction of the railway. Attempts to blow up the track with anti-tank grenades and artillery shells have only temporary success, the enemy, with the support of two armored trains, restored the track. With the fire of armored trains, artillery and tanks, he pushes back the 41st KD, 2nd Guards. KD and 8th VBR from the railway. He firmly holds the highway against Sokolov's cavalry, throws reserve battalions and tanks mainly from the flanks of the shock group of the first guards cavalry corps.

For three days (February 23, 24 and 25, 1942) the corps fought off enemy flank attacks, being in a narrow corridor and trying to connect with Sokolov. One of my patrols went north of PLETUSHOVO and sent a report from the forest north of the highway [Moscow-Minsk]. I did not find Sokolov's parts. The battalion of the 8th airborne brigade (commander Kalashnikov) reached the village. BEREZNYAKI (north of the highway), but did not see Sokolov's units, but only heard the noise of battle somewhere to the north. A long

stay in a narrow corridor under the enemy's crossfire, the impact of aviation and tanks threatened the useless extermination of people. One side of the corridor does not reach the goal.

I have two decisions before me: - either break through north of the motorway to Sokolov, - or go back out of the corridor. The first option would completely free the enemy forces southwest of VYAZMA. The enemy would benefit from such a decision. The second option led to pinning down the enemy southwest of VYAZMA and gave me freedom of maneuver for the future. The second option was chosen, and with heavy fighting and mutual losses, units of the 41st, 21st, 57th Cavalry Divisions and the 8th Airborne Brigade were withdrawn from the double encirclement. The decision was made when the situation was known to me. With the advanced divisions were representatives of the corps headquarters, who reported to me regardless of the reports of the division commanders. Communication was uninterrupted.

Conclusions: The weak composition of the raiding part of the corps, especially in terms of artillery, did not allow breaking through the entire depth of the enemy's defense. The enemy always had an advantage in technology. He freely maneuvered his reserves along previously cleared roads in the depths of the defense. Parts of the corps cannot firmly consolidate success due to their small number and weakness in fire weapons. Therefore, the enemy with his equipment, especially with tanks, penetrates the settlements we are defending. The approaches to VYAZMA are occupied by the enemy on all sides within a radius of 10 to 20 kilometers, and the VYAZMA-SMOLENSK railroad and highway are occupied by the enemy throughout and are stubbornly defending themselves. VYAZMA was not taken by the corps, because it was beyond their strength, the railway was not captured by the corps, although it was crossed, because the enemy was superior in technology and forces. The corps in cash is able to make raids, but is not able to hold the captured (tactically) settlements. The enemy suffered more losses than the corps. The political and moral state of the personnel of the corps is healthy. The initiative of action remained in the hands of the corps.

Gene. - Lieutenant **Belov**

Gene. - Major **Shchelakovsky**

[Resolution: "**Comrade. Golushkevich. Here is an example of incompetence... G. Zhukov, 28.02.1942**"]

3. Report of the commander of the troops of the Kalinin Front to the commander-in-chief of the troops of the western direction on the actions of the 11th cavalry corps in February-March and proposals for its further use[183]

No. 00241

April 2, 1942

1. For two and a half months, the Cavalry Corps has been conducting continuous fierce battles with the enemy for mastering the highway and disrupting the communications of the Rzhev-Vyazma enemy group. The corps drew on itself parts of three enemy divisions, inflicting a serious defeat on them in manpower and materiel. Only in the last battles, the corps destroyed up to three thousand German soldiers and officers, up to 150 vehicles with cargo and ammunition, 10 motorcycles, 28 st. machine guns and more. Currently, the corps is in dire need of urgent replenishment of human, horse

and material resources. Local resources of food and ammunition have been exhausted, and long communication with limited means of transportation does not ensure its normal supply with everything necessary for life and combat. Food is provided intermittently. The transport aviation of the front has limited capabilities to supply everything necessary by air. The horse stock is small and extremely depleted. In recent days, the enemy, having thrown up to one fresh front with tanks, with the support of powerful artillery and aviation, launched a decisive offensive from Vyazma, trying to cover the flanks of the corps

and reach its only communication and throw it back from the highway to the north.

All attempts by the corps to cut the Smolensk-Vyazma highway were unsuccessful, and it works almost normally, and only in the Kulikovo-Androsovo sector is under our artillery fire. In order to preserve the cavalry corps and use it with maximum benefit, I consider it appropriate:

a) Withdraw the cavalry corps to the border of the river. Dnieper, cutting the highway at the Novo-Ivanovskoye, Gorodok section, and take up defense in separate nodes along the western bank of the river. Dnieper to the right flank of the 46th cd (the mouth of the Vyazma River) and prevent the enemy from withdrawing to the western bank of the river. Dnieper. The main forces of the corps should be in the Vadino area and the forest to the north to organize raids to disrupt communications, defeat headquarters and communication centers. b) In

the interests of the front, it is desirable to withdraw the cavalry corps to the Volochek, Andreevskoye line in order to connect with the right flank of the 39th Army and provide it, as well as putting the corps in order, understaffing and supplying it with everything necessary for further actions.

Since the corps performs a task in the interests of the entire Western direction and interacts with the Western Front, I ask for your decision.

Konev

Katsnelson

TsAMO, f. 213, op. 2022, d. 72, l. 190–192.

4. Operational report of the headquarters of the 4th airborne corps on the combat operations of formations and parts of the corps for April 3 [184] , 1942

No.

32 April 3, 1942, 20:00

1. Parts of the 4th Airborne Forces were fighting with the enemy, repulsing the attacks of tanks and infantry. By the end of the day on 03.4.42 they left Bogoroditskoye and Akulovo and withdrew to new positions.

2. The 9th airborne brigade occupies and holds the Prechistoye defense district, the forester's house, Novinskaya dacha and fights with units of the 432nd brigade, conducting active reconnaissance in front of the front.

On the night of 03.4.42, the 2/9 airborne brigade with an artillery division fought for the capture of the south. env. Pure. By 16:00 3.4.42 south. the outskirts of the village were completely cleared of the enemy.

Losses: 1 killed, 7 wounded. Trophies: one wrecked tank, 1 machine. machine gun, 20 rifles, 5 light machine guns, 2 pistols, up to 30 [enemy] soldiers were killed. Brigade command post - forest 1 km south of Vyazovets.

3. Since the morning of 3/4/42, Major Lebedev's detachment has been conducting a defensive battle for Bogoroditskoye and Akulovo. Against [opponents] to superior forces, with the support of tanks, Bogoroditskoye and Akulovo took possession. The detachment withdrew and took

up defense: 4th battalion - the intersection of the narrow-gauge railway. with the road coming from Bogoroditskoye to the sheds, which is on the dor. Preobrazhenskoe-Akulovo.

3 bn defends the edge of the forest sowing. Akulovo, saddle road Akulovo - Preobrazhenskoye [oe].

Detachment losses - 150 people. killed and wounded. The losses of the enemy were over 300 people, 4 tanks were knocked out. The command post of the detachment is near the road Akulovo - Preobrazhensky [oe] (1.5 km of the northern

edge). 4. Major Jabot's group occupies the former defense area, leads all-round reconnaissance, sending out ambushes and sabotage groups.

On the night of April 3, 1942, the 1st battalion carried out an operation to capture the village of Voznesenye, the operation failed. Losses: 1 person. killed, 1 shell-shocked, 14 people. wounded.

5. Separate communications company - Preobrazhensky [e]. Provides communication with units and higher headquarters.

6. Separate divorce, company - Preobrazhensky [e]. Performs shakora tasks. 7. KP shtakor -

Preobrazhensky [e]. Chief of Staff of the 4th

Airborne Forces Major **Kozunko** Military Commissar

of the 4th Airborne Forces Battalion Commissar **Zabolotny**

Beginning Operations Department Major **Kotsar**

TsAMO, f. 37, op. 11431, d. 41, l. 36.

5. Report of the Commander of the Kalinin Front to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, Commander-in-Chief of the Western Direction on the situation in the 30th Army zone and proposals for conducting a further offensive in the Rzhev direction[185]

No. 00266/

op April 9, 1942, 7:10 pm

The implementation of your directive No. 0013 was delayed due to the delay in the arrival of six brigades in the 30th Army, and the offensive by the available forces of the 30th Army did not produce results. The brigades finish their concentration on 10.4.42. Now the situation has become more complicated in connection with the onset of thaw and the forthcoming opening of the river over the next two to three days. Volga. The movement of vehicles across the Volga ceased and created the impossibility of supplying food to the troops. Thus, the main grouping of the 30th Army remains cut off from its rear. I ask you to

approve the following decision: 1. On the

southern bank of the river. Volga in the area of Yakimovo, Dorogino, Ovsyanikovo, Usovo, Nelyubino, Lebzino go to 178, 371, 220 sd, 22 guards. sd, 359 sd and one page brigade to the stubborn defense of the occupied line. By all means, hold a foothold on the southern bank of the river. Volga.

2. Create

a grouping for further offensive consisting of four brigades, 158 sd, 375, 379 sd, by 15.4 concentrate it in the area of Drozdovo, Zhukovo, Golenishchevo and from the morning of 15.4 go on a decisive attack on Bortniki, Linevo, Mishukovo, Poltino from former task. 3. The regrouping is caused by the

need to provide the most reliable routes for the delivery of the group located on the southern bank of the river. Volga, striking at the weakest point of the enemy. In connection with the strike through Linevo, Mishukovo, Poltino, the threat of a flank attack by the enemy from the Sukhush, Azhevo region and our grouping located on the southern bank of the river is eliminated. Volga. 4. In addition to the grouping of four infantry divisions that previously

operated in front of the front of the 30th Army, recently there has been a concentration in the area of Trushkovo, Meshkovo, Reshetalovo up to 70 tanks and two infantry divisions of the new 328 infantry division.

Konev

Leonov

TsAMO, f. 213, op. 2022, d. 72, l. 226–227.

6. Report of the commander of the troops of the Western Front to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief about the situation in the front line [186]

April 9, 1942

I report the situation at the front for the past day 9.4.42. 1. On the front of the 20th Army, the position of the units is unchanged. Parts carried out work to strengthen the defensive lines. On the left flank, the 35th Rifle Regiment resumed a partial offensive in the morning. Due to the strong fire resistance of the enemy, there was no significant advancement. The enemy used six-barreled mortars in this sector of the front. Our tanks, which broke into Kurmen, destroyed two enemy small tanks, two 75-mm guns and four heavy machine guns. 2. 5th Army. The strike group of the army, having entrenched itself on the occupied lines, staffed the units and is preparing to continue

the offensive from the morning of 10.4. During the day, the units repelled four enemy counterattacks, which amounted to hand-to-hand combat. 3. 33rd Army. The position of units on the entire front of the army - without

changes. The units were engaged in a firefight on the former lines.

4. 43rd Army. Parts of the army did not advance during the day of the battle, they fought stubborn battles on the entire front. Prepares strike [infantry] with tanks for the morning

10.4. 5. 49th Army. Parts of the shock group have captured Pavlovo and are entrenched at the achieved lines. From the morning of 10.4 the shock group continues the offensive.

6. 50th Army. There were no significant changes in the position of the army units. There was a firefight at the front. The strike force continued to prepare for the offensive, having made a partial regrouping. 385th Rifle Division was advancing on Prosolovo, slowly moving forward. The enemy puts up stubborn resistance. The position of the division is specified.

7. On the front of the Belov group, there was a battle with the advancing enemy with a force of up to two infantry battalions. Parts of the 2nd Guards. under pressure from the enemy, Verbilovo was abandoned on the southern sector of the front. The battle continues for Ilyinka. 8. 10th Army. The

position of the army units is unchanged. There was a firefight at the front. Enemy aviation was active, carrying out group raids on the rear of the army.

9. 16th Army. Forces 5 Guards. sk, 328, 324 and 322 sd continued a stubborn battle for the capture of enemy strongholds Kotovichi, hut. Khotkov, Dubrovka, Klinty, Khatkovo. 10. The Air Force produced only 26 aircraft due to bad weather. sorties in the strip of the 43rd army.

Zhukov

Khokhlov

TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2511, d. 1036, l. 40–41.

7. Report of the commander of the troops of the Western Front to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the situation in the front line [187]

No. 108

April 11, 1942

I report the situation at the front for the past day 11.4.42. 1. 5th Army. 352 sd and 1 guards. SBR advancing in the grove of sowing. - app. Sorokino, did not advance during the day, having met the stubborn resistance of the enemy. The remaining forces of the shock group were preparing to continue the offensive. Parts of the 108th and 50th Rifle Divisions in the first half of the day repulsed three enemy infantry counterattacks, supported by single tanks. 2. 33rd Army. Parts of the Efremov group, having organized defense in the area of Kuznetsovka, Vysokoye (along the east

bank of the Ugra river), the forest of the east. Zholobovo, Fedotkovo, fought a heavy battle with the advancing infantry and enemy tanks. On the night of 12.4 hours, ammunition and food are dropped to parts of the group. The position of the parts of the eastern group is unchanged.

3. 43rd Army. The troops of the army, which went over to the offensive on the entire front in the morning, met stubborn resistance from the enemy, who repeatedly went over to counterattacks. A particularly stubborn battle continues on the Bol front. Mouth, Red October. The units, held back by heavy fire from the enemy ground forces, massive air strikes, made little progress during the day. During the day, the enemy carried out 218 sorties against Golubev's main grouping. The fight continues.

4. The 49th Army, having resumed the offensive with a strike group in the morning, due to the stubborn resistance of the enemy and the impact of his aviation, which carried out repeated group raids on the battle formations of the advancing units during the day, had little progress. Parts of the 194th Rifle Division captured 10 machine guns, 10 machine guns, 30 rifles and several dugouts.

5. 50th Army. Parts of the army continue to prepare for the offensive from the morning of 13.4. 6. On

the front of the 4th Airborne Forces on the night of 11.4, the enemy occupied Deniskovo. The fight continues.

7. The position of the units of the group of General Belov, 20th and 10th armies unchanged. The enemy did not show any activity in these sectors of the front.

8. 16th Army. The offensive of the 5th Guards. Sk., 12 Guards. sd and 328 sd develop slowly due to the stubborn resistance of the enemy. Parts continue to fight on the same lines. 323rd Rifle Division in the first half of the day repulsed the enemy counterattack with a force up to an infantry battalion.

9. The Air Force, due to the poor condition of the airfields, made only 35 sorties in 11.4.

Zhukov

Khokhlov

TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2511, d. 1036, l. 44–45.

8. Directive of the Commander of the Western Front to the Commander of the 33rd, 43rd and 49th Armies and the Commander of the Air Force of the Front on methods of action in order to ensure the connection of the Efremov group with the main forces of the 43rd and 49th Armies[188]

April 11, 1942

Commander of 33 tons. **Efremov**

Commander of 43 tons.

Golubev Commander of 49 tons.

Zakharkin Copy: Chief of the General Staff Comrade **Shaposhnikov**.

In view of the failure of the 43rd and 49th armies to fulfill the assigned tasks of clearing the rear routes of the 33rd army from the enemy and connecting with the Efremov

group, in connection with the withdrawal of the 113th and 338th SD of the Efremov group from the Tyakino, Stulokovo, Vyalovka area to east bank of the river Ugra creates the threat of an isolated defeat of the Efremov group.

In order to prevent the defeat of the Efremov group, I order: a) the commander of the 43 t. Viselevo, Zhary and, having gained a foothold at this line, during 14.04 capture Bol. Viselevo, Nov. Mikhailovka; b) the commander of the 49 t. Zakharkin during 12 and on the night of 13.04 capture height 180.5, Stenenki and, having

gained a foothold at this line, on 14.04 capture Moseenki, Degtyanka, Tibeykina; c) the commander of 33 t. Boslavka, Nov. Mikhailovka, Moseenki, where to connect with units of the 43rd and 49th armies. To allocate the

best units to the vanguard and side detachments, reinforcing them with artillery, anti-tank guns and sapper units. When meeting with the enemy, do not engage in protracted battles and immediately bypass the enemy in a closed area. The movement is carried out mainly at night. During the retreat, the rearguard units should make the area impassable, mine and remove blockages. All roads and approaches to the main route of movement of the main forces should also be mined, for which purpose selected teams should be thrown out in advance. When departing, take the local horse train, convoy and men from 16 to 55 years old with you; d) Commander of the Air Force comrade Khudyakov - all aviation of the front and the nearest armies, except for group No. 4 of the Supreme [Main] Command, should be thrown to ensure the actions of the Efremov group. During 12.4 all aircraft bomb and storm the enemy in

Buslava, Belyaev, Lye, Relatives, Dorks, Borisenki, Shu-mikhina, Grekov. On the night of April 13, strike at Borisenki, Grekov, Shumikhin; e) to the commander of the 43rd Army, at nightfall on the

night of 13.04, with long-range artillery fire, give a cut-off fire in the Grekov, Kozly, Nov. Luke. During 13-14.04, give cut-off fire at Efremov's headquarters. Commander-49 at the same time give cut-off fire in the area of Slobodka, Yakimtsevo. Day 13 and 14 to fire on the same areas. Receipt to confirm, execution to convey.

Zhukov

Khokhlov

Golushkevich

TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2513, d. 210, l. 154–156.

9. Telephone conversations between Army Commander 43, General Golubev, and Chief of the Operational Directorate of the Western Front Headquarters, Major General Golushkevich[189]

04/18/1942

Golubev. Hello. I ask you to report to the General of the Army Comrade. Zhukov the results of a survey of two commanders who, with a group of 20 people, left the encirclement in the area southeast of Gorodets today. I spoke with them and comrade. Bogolyubov. One is the head of art. supply of the 160th SD, Major

Tretyakov, and the second - the commandant of the special department of the 160th SD ml. Lieutenant Nazarov. I'll give you the gist:

1. According to them, Efremov with a group of 2,000 people on the morning of 04/14/1942 walked from the Peskovsky forest in the direction of the village of Zhary. They had a fight, after which Efremov turned with a group (with a group of 500 people) towards MALY VISELEV. Not reaching MALY VISELEV, there

was also a battle in the forest, where enemy tanks also took part. Junior Lieutenant Nazarov reported that he saw Efremov for the last time at 03:00 on 04/16/1942

of the year. Both of these commanders, on their own initiative, organized a group, with which they went to this area, which I reported on.

2. They confirm that in the GORODETS area and to the south there is a continuous defense and the presence of wire.

3. They suggest that in the forests to the south and southwest of MALY VISELEV there is a significant group and, possibly, Comrade Efremov himself. 4. Our measures:

At 21:00 on 04/18/1942, a general attack

was scheduled again with

a categorical demand to throw everything we have into battle in order to break through the defenses and rescue Comrade Efremov's units. In addition to the active three reconnaissance groups, which we reported on, I order along with them to organize a series of small attacks.

Golushkevich. It turns out a strange thing: small groups of hungry, exhausted people, without any artillery, fight through the entire depth of the enemy's defensive line.

At the same time as your whole army cannot break through this defense, while having a large saturation of artillery.

There are gaps in the enemy disposition, and these groups pass through them, meeting, perhaps, a little resistance from the Germans, which they overcome. The surest and best way to help out Efremov is your breakthrough. You must understand the dire situation of Yefremov both with food and ammunition, and you must not hope that Yefremov will break through on his own, but must clear the way for him.

Such a task has been set before you by the Commander-in-Chief, and the Military Council of the Army is responsible for its implementation with its head. It is necessary to clarify the area where the bulk of Efremov's forces are located as soon as possible so that food and ammunition can be dropped from the air. Organize a survey of people who have left the environment and report the results immediately

TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2511, d. 1435, l. 197.

10. Report of the commander of the troops of the Western Front to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the situation in the front line

and the actions of the formations of the 43rd Army in order to ensure the exit from the encirclement of the group of M. G. Efremov[190]

No. 120

April 18, 1942

I am reporting on the situation at the front for the past day on April 18,

1942. 1. The position of the units of the 20th and 5th armies is unchanged. The second echelons of the troops of the 20th Army are engaged in combat training. Parts of the 5th Army continued to prepare for the offensive. The enemy was not active in these sectors of the front. 2. 33rd Army. The position

of the parts of the eastern group is unchanged. In the zone of the 43rd Army, two groups of 77 soldiers and commanders from the 113th and 160th rifle divisions came out. According to the report of artillery supply of the 160th Rifle Division of Major Tretyakov, a detachment of 2000 people, led by General Efremov, on 16.4 moved with battles from the Peskov area in the direction of Mal. Viselovo. According to the report of the commanders who came out on the front of the 43rd Army, and air reconnaissance data, the main forces of the Efremov group on the night of 18.4 were presumably in the forests of the north. - east. and east of Mal. Boslavka. The data is verified by aerial reconnaissance. 3. 43rd Army. On the front Gorodets, Red October, a stubborn battle continues. The enemy continues to put up

strong resistance. In order to complete the breakthrough of the enemy's defense and connect with units of the Efremov group moving in the direction of Mal. Viselovo, the army troops went on the offensive at 21:00 18.4. 4. 49th Army. Parts of the army strike group continue a stubborn battle on the front of the west. edge of the forest sowing. Pavlovo, 300–400 m west. and southwest Pavlovo. The enemy puts up stubborn

resistance. On the rest of the front, the position of the units is unchanged. 5. 50th Army. The 173rd, 146th and 198th Rifle Divisions, entrenched at the achieved lines, conducted reconnaissance, brought up ammunition and prepared for

the continuation of the offensive. The left-flank divisions of the

shock group of the army, advancing on the front of the forest sowing. Gorelovsky, Malinovsky, continue the fight, meeting the stubborn resistance of the enemy. Enemy aviation in group raids (total 101 aircraft

[flight]) bombarded and fired at the combat formations of the troops of the shock group. 6. There were no

significant changes in the position of the units of the group of General Belov for 18.4. Parts of the 4th Airborne Forces by the morning of

18.4 captured Buda (6 km north - east Milyatino). On the night of 19.4, parts of the corps attacked Askerovo.

7. The position of the troops of the 10th and 1b armies is unchanged. At the front, there is a rare skirmish and reconnaissance activities. The enemy did not show any activity in these sectors of the front.

8. Air Force for 18.4 made 62 sorties to cover their troops and reconnaissance.

Zhukov

Khokhlov

TsAMO, f. 208, op. 2511, d. 1036, l. 69–70.

B. German documents

11. Order of the OKH to the command of Army Group Center about the procedure for the capture of Moscow and the treatment of its population[191] High Command of the
Ground Forces General Staff, Operations Department

October 12, 1941

No. 1571/41

SECRET

The High Command of the Ground Forces ordered:

“The Fuhrer again decided that Moscow’s surrender should not be counted on, even if it were offered by the enemy. The moral right to this event is clear to the whole world. Just as in Kyiv the delayed-fuse explosions had dire consequences for the troops, in Moscow and Leningrad this should be expected to an even greater extent. Soviet radio itself announced the mining of Leningrad and its defense to the last man. A serious danger of plague is to be expected. Therefore, no German soldier should enter these cities. Anyone who tries to leave the city to our lines must be shot. Therefore, unobstructed areas that allow the population to penetrate deep into the Soviet country should be encouraged. It also applies to all other cities that, before being captured, they must be destroyed by artillery fire and bomber aircraft, and their population should be given the opportunity to leave.

For the mobilization of German soldiers to save Russian cities from the danger of fire and feeding the population of these cities at the expense of the German state, responsibility is removed. Chaos in Russia will be the greater, and our administration and the use of occupied areas the easier, the more the Russian population will go into the interior of the country. This order of the Fuhrer must be brought

to the attention of all commanders. Complementing the main command of the ground forces.

The city should be cut off as soon as possible from its connecting ways with the outside world.

(Necessary further additions follow.)

TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12 462, d. 114, l. 74–75. Translation from him.

12. Report of the operational department of the headquarters of the 2nd Army to the headquarters of the Army Group "Center" with an assessment of the situation at 13:00 December 11 [192] 1941

***December 11, 1941
14:30***

The enemy broke through the front line of the army with the main attack direction Novosil, Orel. New forces follow the broken enemy. The enemy, located in the region of the southern and northern flanks of the army, is active and does not allow the transfer of forces from this far-stretched guard position. The 95th Infantry Division lost a full third of its already weakened fighting force. The 45th and 134th Infantry Divisions can hardly be counted on. Snow drifts, lack of ammunition, fuel, food and fodder, as well as the lack of an experienced command - all this makes it very difficult for these divisions to withdraw in an organized manner. The intended

use of the entire 8th Aviation Corps on 12/11/41 failed. The extremely necessary supply of the 34th Army Corps by air was carried out only to a small extent. In addition, a gap more than 30 km wide remains completely open. The promised formations with a force of 2 **1/3** divisions, apparently, immediately upon

arrival will be independently used to protect and hold the Orel-Kursk road . Another 3-4 divisions are needed for counterattacks. ***Operations Department of the 2nd Army***

TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12 462, d. 118, l. 132. Translation from German.

13. Report of the headquarters of the 4th Army to the headquarters of the Army Group "Center" on the situation of troops in the Medyn region[193]

January 12, 1942

9:50 pm

Medyn is surrounded from the north and northwest. The weak forces available there cannot hold the city. In the event of a breakthrough near Medyn, which is inevitable, the enemy will reach Yukhnov along the highway, and there is no way to put up a single German soldier against him. As a result, the entire 4th Army will be defeated. In addition, in the event of the withdrawal of our troops, it was planned to remove two regimental groups from the front and send them to Yukhnov to protect the highway and the northern flank. With the loss of the Medev station, the supply of the army is stopped. The collapse of the 4th Army is inevitable. [194]

TsAMO, f. 500, op. 12462, d. 565, l. 87. Translation from German.

14. Report from the Commander of Army Group Center to the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces on the situation of troops in the areas of Sukhinichi and Rzhev[195]

Army Group Center (1a) No.

374/42 Sov.

secret January

14, 1942, 11:30

The task of the army group is to hold the current front line and liquidate deep breakthroughs, primarily west of Sukhinichi and west of Rzhev. In connection with the development of the situation at the front, and especially

in connection with the catastrophic situation in the field of supply, I am not in a position to carry out this task.

The extreme extension of the front, despite all attempts, does not allow the release of a sufficient number of forces for the offensive. All measures at the front itself, as well as the introduction of reserves into battle, were nowhere decisively successful. Only immediate and

a planned withdrawal to a shorter line (as has been repeatedly demanded) will make it possible to save the forces so necessary for a successful offensive in the Rzhev area. The passage of this shortened line appears to me in general terms as follows: the 2nd Army and the 2nd Tank Army, still south and west

of Sukhinichi, depending on the further development of the situation - Yukhnov, east of Gzhatsk, Pogoreloye Gorodishche, north of Rzhev, Lake . Desire.

Along with the release of reserves, I intend in this way to close the gap in the Medyn region and give the troops better supply conditions, primarily shorter supply routes. The latter is of particular importance in connection with the expected frosts. I hope that the troops, if they receive the appropriate order immediately, under the existing weather conditions, will be able to carry out a retreat with minimal material losses. Of course, that the waste will pass through the sections. Depending on the state of the troops, the situation with fuel, road conditions and enemy actions, the withdrawal of units of individual armies will differ from each other and will take place according to the instructions of the headquarters of the army group. During the retreat of our troops, the enemy will, of course, gain freedom of maneuver and, possibly, go deeper into the already existing breakthrough areas. However, in such cases it is inevitable. On the other hand, the enemy will move further and further away from their bases and will gradually lose striking power. After weighing all the auxiliary measures and consulting with the army commanders, I can say that there is nothing left for me

but to re-apply for the freedom of action for the army group. The situation on the army group front has recently become so serious, especially as a result of the supply crisis, that I cannot give any guarantee that the retreat movement will be possible in the form I have proposed and, all the more so that [it] will lead to a long stabilization of the front of the army group, even if my proposal is accepted. Despite this, the withdrawal of troops is the only possible measure capable of

save the situation.

von Kluge